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## ***STATE AND CULTURE IN MEDIEVAL INDIA***



# STATE AND CULTURE IN MEDIEVAL INDIA

*by*  
Khaliq Ahmad Nizami

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## ***Preface***

The studies that constitute this volume were either delivered as Presidential Addresses at Conferences or presented as papers at Seminars. Naturally, therefore, the spectrum is wide and covers multifarious aspects of polity, culture and religion during the medieval period. An effort to identify new sources of investigation underlies the studies presented here. Besides emphasizing the value of geo-politics in the study of medieval Indian history, attempt has been made to evaluate the application of new tools of historical analysis—like quantification of data and psycho-historical method—to the study of the main political and cultural developments of the period. It is felt that fresh perspectives may be added to the study of medieval India if developments in the contemporary Asiatic world are not lost sight of. A synoptic overview of the non-chalant attitude of the Chishti saints towards rulers, an analysis of the role of the Naqshbandi order in Indian politics, an assessment of Shah Waliullah's contribution to the dynamic elements of Muslim thought in India, provide background for the study of many an aspect of the political and cultural history of medieval India.

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September 28, 1985.**





# I

## Approach and Perspective



## *Perspectives for the study of Medieval India\**

The tenor and conspectus of studies in medieval Indian History, as also the place that it occupies in the general framework of India's history, has been determined by the British Indian scholars of the 19th century. Sir Henry Elliot's Introduction to his *History*, by far the most important document in this respect, mirrors the ideals and objectives of these scholars. Elliot's claim was that if the material selected by him was placed before the people it would "*make our native subjects more sensible of the immense advantages accruing to them under the mildness and equity of our rule.*"<sup>1</sup> He, therefore, painted the Indian past in colours, no doubt borrowed from its political chroniclers, but with his own projections of light and shade. Medieval Indian history thus became an instrument for the implementation of the Imperialistic formula "counterpoise of natives against natives" evolved by the British Army Commission after the movement of 1857. While no fair-minded historian can withhold his meed of praise and tribute to Sir Henry Elliot, who courted consumption in his devotion to medieval Indian History and rescued many Persian and Arabic manuscripts from extinction, the ideas motivating his approach to history not only blurred our historical perspective but poisoned the springs of our national life. For generations

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\*Presidential Address (Medieval Section) delivered at the Twenty Seventh Session of the Indian History Congress, Allahabad 1965.

1. *The History of India as told by its own Historians*, I, p. XXII.

his 8 volumes of the *History of India* have been the basis of countless text books on Indian History and the virus so imperceptibly injected by Elliot has dangerously affected our entire attitude and approach towards life.

The chief errors of Sir Henry Elliot and the Anglo-Indian writers who have followed him may be briefly enumerated. *First*, they regarded the medieval period as something essentially separate from the main current of India's history; *second*, they confined themselves to works on political history and denied that there was any branch of literature by which we could discover something about the thoughts and feelings of the Indian people; a partial and parochial view of medieval historiography, therefore, gained ground and political chronicles, with all their prejudices and predilections which needed careful scrutiny and analysis, came to be looked upon as the exclusive source of our historical knowledge; *third*, they overlooked the fact that the basis of the state or government from the foundation of the civilizations of Egypt, Near East and classical Greece has all over the world, till very recent times, been a governing and exploiting class. *Fourth*, while pointing out the crimes of the medieval kings and their governing classes they quite overlooked what was happening at the same time in contemporary Europe. Bad as the position of the Indian peasant was according to all calculations, it was not so bad as that of the European serf. *Fifth*, because the Europeans in this country, whether government officers, planters, or merchants, formed a governing class, they jumped to the wholly impossible and erroneous conclusion that the Musalmans, as such, were a governing class, while the Hindus, as such, were the governed. Any of the mystic works of the period to which I will refer in due course will prove that while different microscopic minorities of Muslim groups had at different times a greater proportion of higher government posts, the mass of the Musalmans belonged to what we would today call the lower middle class and the working class.

Barani's *Fatawa-i-Jahandari*,<sup>1</sup> written about 1357, fully bears out this conclusion. The *sixth* error of our Anglo-Indian historians was that, in the pride of their power, they totally forgot the shallow and temporary foundations of colonialism and imagined that unlike the governing classes of the past, their government would last for all time.

These errors have to be rectified. In spite of many unfortunate crimes, it has to be pointed out that the history of India has been basically secular and that it was not possible in the middle ages to build an Indian Empire except on the cooperation of all her people. Whenever this secular and cooperative principle was ignored, the all-India government collapsed and shrank into an insignificant kingdom. It must be remembered that the over-weightage of Musalmans in government was balanced by the fact that the *zamindars* and the merchant-princes were almost all Hindus, while in the home-provinces of the Delhi Sultanate and the Mughal Empire, there were very few Muslim peasants in the open countryside.

Division of time into epochs is a historical convention ; it should not, however, be allowed to compartmentalize the perspective of our history. Empires have risen and crumbled ; dynasties have been set up and pulled down, but beneath a constant flux of political events there has been a basic continuity in the main current of Indian social stream. An endless process of absorption, assimilation and adjustment of diverse elements and tendencies has gone on for centuries giving shape and complexion to the cultural tradition of India. How this tradition becomes articulate in the medieval Muslim mind may be read in *Nuh Sipihir*,<sup>2</sup> where Amir Khusrau looks back at India's pre-Muslim past as an inalienable part of his own historical personality and tries to find out elements of unity not only in social and cultural life but even in the basic

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1. Text edited by Mrs. A. Salim Khan, Lahore 1972 ; English translation : *The Political Theory of the Delhi Sultanate* by Prof. M. Habib and Mrs. A. Salim Khan, Kitab Mahal, Allahabad.
  2. Edited by Dr. M. Wahid Mirza, Calcutta 1948.

categories of thought and belief :

نست هندو ارچہ کہ دیندار چوما  
ہست بسے جائے باقرار چوما

“(Though Hindu is not a believer like me ; he nevertheless believes in many things which I believe”), he declares in a very confident strain. This consciousness of unity and continuity of the Indian heritage, transcending all transient barriers of political organization, has been a great formative force in our history and has found expression in the thought and behaviour of men belonging to such diverse walks of life as Amir Khusrau, Sayyid Muhammad Ghaus, Akbar, Abul Fazl, Faizi, Dara Shukoh, Mirza Mazhar and Azad Bilgrami who proclaimed the unique organic nature of our national culture.

The most dominant fact of Indian history during the medieval period is India's contact with Islam which had a deep impact on social, cultural, political and economic life of the country. The history of this contact is often, though obviously wrongly, traced from the Turkish invasions of northern India. India's first contact with Islam was commercial and cultural, not political or military. Arab traders came to the sea-coasts of India and carried Indian goods to the European markets by way of Egypt and Syria. Many of them had their settlements along the South Western coast of India and enjoyed perfect freedom to perform their religious rites and live their community life under the Hindu rulers. Muslim judges, known as *hunarman*, decided their disputes. Similarly Indian merchants had settled in Arabia, particularly Yemen, and their life and manners had deeply influenced those who came in touch with them. At Ubalah there was such a large number of Indian settlements that it had come to be known as ارض الہند

Through these merchants many Indian words and navigational terms found their way into the Arabic vocabulary. Even the Qur'an contains three Indian words—*mushk* (mask), *zanjbil* (ginger) and *kafur* (camphor). The word *tuba* in the Qur'an (xiii: 29) is also considered by some Arab lexicographers to

be an Indian term for paradise. The presence of the Indian tribe of Jats in Arabia during the time of the Prophet is borne out by authentic traditions (*ahadis*). It appears that some Jat physicians had settled in Arabia. Imam Bukhari, one of the most reliable compilers of the traditions of the Prophet, informs us that once when Hazrat 'Ayesha, wife of the Prophet, fell ill her nephew sent for a Jat physician for her treatment.<sup>1</sup> An Indian raja sent a jar of ginger pickle as present to the Prophet who relished it and distributed it amongst his companions.<sup>2</sup> Indeed if the history of Islam's contact with India is traced from these South-eastern Arab settlements, it would remove many of the misunderstandings which have prejudiced the study of medieval India.

During the period that followed the Arab occupation of Sind, cultural relations between India and the Arab world entered another very significant phase. Baghdad evinced keen interest in Hindu contributions in the sphere of mathematics, astronomy, toxicology, chemistry, medicine, astrology, parables and politics and the *Bait-ul-Hikma* got innumerable Sanskrit works translated into Arabic. Hindu physicians were invited to the Darul Khilafa where a hospital dispensed Ayurvedic medicine under the supervision of Hindu doctors. The Arabs transmitted some of the Indian sciences, particularly the Indian decimal system, to Europe ; and while the Europeans called it the Arabic numeral, the Arabs themselves gratefully remembered it as '*Ilm-al-Hindisa*'. There was hardly any branch of Indian learning with which the Arabs did not become familiar before the Turkish conquest of northern India. In fact Alberuni's *Kitab-ul-Hind* was the culmination, not the beginning, of a long process of evaluation, assessment and acceptance of Hindu achievements in the different spheres of secular learning. Shahrastani, a keen and critical scholar of comparative religions, observed in his *Kitab-ul-Milal wan Nihal* :

ان العرب و الهند يتقاربان على مذهب واحد

1. *Kitab al-Adab al-mufrad* p. 35.

2. *Al-Mustadrak*, Hyderabad, IV, p. 35.

(The Arabs and the people of Hindustan are religiously near to each other).

He found this identity in two basic attitudes : (a) the desire to investigate and understand the *essence* of things, and (b) an inclination towards the *spiritual* aspect of things.

Mahmud's Indian campaigns disturbed this whole process of cultural give and take and, as Alberuni very definitely states, created a bitterness in Indian mind. A century and a half later, when the caste system deprived India of its dynamic energy and the Turks established their power in northern India, the urge for cultural rapprochement found a new medium—Mysticism. Curiously enough it was at Ghaznin, under the decadent Ghaznavid dynasty that Persian mystic poetry was born. Sana'i and 'Attar, spiritual precursors of the famous Rumi, laid the foundations of this poetry which became a powerful vehicle for the dissemination of cosmopolitan ideas and genuine humanism. Sana'i, it is said, visited India and learnt some Indian languages also. What Ghaznin had lost in the heyday of its political glory, it regained in the days of its decadence through the efforts of mystics and saints.

It is, however, significant that before the establishment of the Delhi Sultanate, Muslim settlements had struck roots in northern India and there were Muslims living at Ajmer, Nagaur, Qannauj, Bilgram and, according to Ibn-i-Asir, even at Benares. These settlements which had taken place in an entirely different mental and emotional climate supplied strength to the mystic movement and attracted more and more creative social and intellectual energies of the people. The Sufi saints discarded the exclusive thinking of the *ulama* and rejected the racial prejudices of the Muslim governing class. Rising above all narrow and parochial divisions of society, they laid emphasis on eternal human values. Their broad and tolerant outlook paved way for the liquidation of social and linguistic barriers between the various culture groups of India; while their pantheistic approach brought them very close to the treasures of ancient Hindu religious thought, particularly the *Upanishads*, and created an atmosphere favourable for the



exchange of ideas at a higher level. One of the most significant elements in their thought was their concept of religion which was not merely catholic and humanitarian but also dynamic and revolutionary. Shaikh Nizam-u'd-din Auliya thus defined the supreme objective of all religious devotions: There are two types of devotion: *ta'at-i-lazmi* and *ta'at-i-muta'addi*. The *ta'at-i-lazmi* consists in offering prayers as ordained—fasting, reciting the Qur'an, and other similar acts of devotion for the personal salvation of the individual; the *ta'at-i-muta'addi* consists in doing good to other people, bringing happiness to their heart and healing their wounds. The reward for *ta'at-i-muta'addi*, observed the Shaikh, is greater than that of *ta'at-i-lazmi*. This concept of devotion coloured the Shaikh's whole approach towards life and determined his assessment of some of the historical figures of the age. In his own peculiar mystic way he told his audience one day that what led to the salvation of Iltutmish was his construction of the Hauz-i-Shamsi<sup>1</sup> Neither the ceaseless military campaigns of the founder of the Delhi Sultanate, which some would be inclined to interpret in terms of religion, nor his constant vigils and continuous penitences which theologians would have deemed enough for his salvation, had any real significance in the eyes of a medieval mystic. It was an act of public welfare—a *ta'at-i-muta'addi*—which won his approbation. This identification of religion with the service of humanity gave a new *elan vital* to religion. The *khanqahs* of medieval saints consequently developed into places where people of all types, belonging to different religious and cultural backgrounds, assembled and a process of interaction started in language, social life and religious thought and behaviour. The earliest sentences of *Hindawi* that we have discovered were uttered in the *Khanqahs*. Concerned more with emotional harmony than ideological synthesis, which was a very slow process and touched only a limited section of intellectuals, they created an atmosphere of mutual trust, good will and understanding by emphasizing respect for basic human values. The tradition of these early Sufi saints

1. *Fawa'id-u'l-Fu'ad* pp. 13-14.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 19.

was further buttressed and strengthened by the Bhakti saints of the 14th and the 15th centuries.

Guru Nanak has declared:

‘Religion consisteth not in mere words,  
He who looks upon all men as equal is religious’.

The teachings of Kabir, Dadu, Chaitanya, Ram Das, Pipa, Sena and others, based as they were on a realization of the multi-racial, multi-religious and multi-lingual patterns of Indian society, sought to evolve a social attitude which would not merely tolerate different forms of thought and belief, but would also look upon them as part of a common heritage. Sayyid Muhammad Ghaus Gwaliyari popularised Hindu mystical practices amongst the Shattari saints through his translation of *Amrit Kund* and established identity of connotation between Muslim and Hindu mystical terminology. ‘Abdur Rahman Rudaulvi, a prolific Chishti writer of the 17th century, made an attempt in his *Mir’at-ul-Makhlūqat* to adapt and approximate Hindu legends to Muslim concepts. Mirza Mazhar Jan-i-Janan strongly rebutted the orthodox point of view regarding the Hindu sacred books and gave Hinduism a significant place in the evolution of the religious thought of mankind. In this city of Allahabad, Shah Muhibbullah, a great saint of the Chishti order, was approached by Dara Shukoh, whom he had initiated in the monistic thought of Ibn-i-‘Arabi, to advise him whether discrimination between a Muslim and a non-Muslim was permitted for a ruler. The saint told him that any such discrimination between a Muslim and a non-Muslim negated the true spirit of religion. No human thought or movement proceeds in a straight line: there are deviations, disagreements and aberrations; but the general direction of mystical thought in India was invariably towards the growth of a cosmopolitan outlook which Babur so significantly designated as the ‘Hindustani way’ of living and

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1. *Kalamat-i Taiyyabat*, pp. 37-40.

2. *Maktubat-i Shah Muhibbullah Allahabadi*, (MS).

thinking. This 'Hindustani way' of living became as much a part and parcel of the cultural outlook and the social behaviour of the Indian Muslims that it could be easily distinguished by foreigners. As early as the 13th century when Shaikh Baha-u'd-din Zakariya of Multan reached Baghdad the inmates of Shaikh Shihab-u'd-din Suhrawardi's *khanqah* referred to him as a *هندوستانی* ; and a century later when Shaikh Safi-u'd-din went to Damascus and entered into a debate with Ibn-i-Taimiya, people found in his conversation an *Indian* accent. A study of the mystic movements of medieval India on scientific and objective lines would, therefore, be helpful in an assessment of the forces which have sought unity in the diversity of Indian life and thought, and have enlivened the processes of integration in our national life.

In the assessment of Muslim polity of the medieval period the fact is often lost sight of that the Sultanate had no sanction in religion ; strictly speaking kingship as a political institution was an experiment beyond the pale of *shari'at*, if not entirely *anti-shari'at*. Exigencies of the situation gave birth to it and it derived its sustenance from the temporal and secular impulses of the ruling classes. The Sultanate of Delhi was managed and run on secular lines ; its policy was determined by political requirements rather than the dictates of religion. Theologians without any insight into the political needs of the time, like Sayyid Nur-u'd-din Mubarak and Qazi Mughis expected the rulers to enforce the laws of the *Shari'at*, as they understood and interpreted them, but the rulers refused to oblige them, acting as their political instincts demanded. Writing during the reign of Firuz Shah Tughluq, whose administration is generally deemed to be theologically orientated, Zia-u'd-din Barani remarks in his *Fatawa-i-Jahandari* that it was not possible to adhere to the laws of the *Shari'at* in matters appertaining to the State, that as the *Shari'at* was silent about most matters appertaining to public law the Sultans had perforce to promulgate *Zawabit* (state-laws), which were based on the discretion of the Sultan and his advisers with reference to the public good and that if there

was a conflict between a state-law and the *Shari'at* at the state-law was to prevail. The Sultanate of Delhi looked more to the Sassanid ideals and traditions of kingship than to the Islamic principles and ideals of government. There was hardly any item of taxation in which the original Islamic principles were adhered to ; even the connotation of terms like *jiziya* and *kharaj* had undergone a complete change.

A critical study of the changing patterns of the governing class during this period will yield fruitful results in the evaluation of the spirit of the medieval governments. The impossibility of running an administration exclusively with the help of a foreign bureaucracy became evident within a few decades of the establishment of the Delhi Sultanate. 'Imad u'd-din Raihan was not merely a political rival of Ulugh Khan ; he was the earliest symbol of those forces which aimed at creating a broad base for the medieval governments of India. It was under the pressure of such forces, initiated and sustained by identical social trends, that the *Turkish state* of the Ilbarites yielded place to the *Indo-Muslim State* of the Khaljis and the Tughluqs and ultimately led to the emergence of the *Indian State* of the Mughals. Akbar's political outlook was an outcome of the accumulated political wisdom of the generations that had gone by and was a logical development inherent in the very nature of the situation. It reminds one of the operation of the law of continuity in historical development and the gradual and unconscious nature of cultural evolution. Consequently, the Mughal Empire was destined to last longer than even the five preceding dynasties of the Sultanate period taken together.

The Delhi Sultanate was no doubt the focal point of Indian politics in the early medieval period but excessive concentration on its political and military activity and the identification of the history of medieval India with the history of the Delhi Sultans and their officers has created an imbalance in our perspective. The history of a period cannot and should not be identified with the activities of the ruling class alone. The life and activities of the common man—his reactions to

different situations, his hopes and frustrations—should also be taken into consideration. Besides, for a proper and comprehensive appraisal of the Indian political scene during the early medieval period, it is necessary to take into account many local dynasties also which lived an autonomous life of their own. The nature of central control even in areas under the Sultanate varied according to circumstances and situations; there was complete and direct control in some areas, indirect control in others and overlordship in still others; and with this varying nature of control the application of state-laws also varied. The rise of the provincial kingdoms during the 14th and 15th centuries is often viewed in the context of the dismemberment of the Delhi Sultanate. These provincial kingdoms were an assertion of those regional elements which had not found full opportunity to blossom under the Sultanate. It were these kingdoms, not the Delhi Sultanate alone, which provided the constructional material for the all-India administrative edifice of the Mughals which became an expression of the cumulative Indian political talent of the middle ages.

Our evaluation of men, movements and developments of the medieval period of our history has often suffered from a lack of perspective. Historical facts are meaningless unless coordinated with the production system and the social and cultural ideas of the time. A careful study of the Karramiyan faith, its basic concepts, and its ideological affinities with Mahayana Buddhism, is necessary in order to understand the atmosphere of the areas from where the Ghurians hailed. The fact that Shihāb-u'd-din was initially a believer in Karramiyan faith is too significant to be ignored. The Turkish tribes which led Muslim armies into India in the 12th and 13th centuries were, far from being the representatives of Islam, not even fully converted to the faith and many of their cultural centres had a very recent history of conversion to Islam. Even as late as the middle of the 11th century, Ghur was for the most part, a non-Muslim territory—a fact borne out both by Abul Fazl Baihaqi and the author of *Hudud-ul-'Alam*. The various projects of Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq would appear as meaning-

less ventures dictated by whim and fancy unless viewed in the context of the developments in Central Asian and Middle Eastern politics. His experiments in currency require a coordination with the economic trends in the contemporary East. His religious outlook, particularly his relations with the sufis, would remain inexplicable unless studied with reference to the impact of the movement of the famous Syrian purist reformer, Ibn-i-Taimiyya, whose representative 'Abdul 'Aziz Ardbaili received a cordial welcome at the court of the Tughluq Sultan. The purpose and significance of Muhammad bin Tughluq's embassies sent to different South West and South East Asian countries still remains to be investigated with the help of records available in foreign libraries. A study of conflict for the Caliphal authority between the Mughals and the Ottomans can supply a more effective background to Akbar's *Mahzar* than the discussions in the 'Ibadat Khana taken by themselves. Indeed the Delhi Sultanate and the Mughal Empire—and for the matter of that some of the provincial kingdoms of the medieval period—cannot be treated as isolated entities, politically and culturally cut off from the rest of the world. There was hardly any sphere—political, cultural, or commercial in which brisk relations did not exist between India and the outside world. A careful study of the Arab historical and geographical works can help us in understanding the Indian economic life, particularly its imports and exports, in a world perspective. The authors of *Subh-ul-Asha* and *Masalik-ul-Absar*, for instance, have studied the economic structure of medieval India, particularly its weights, measures and currencies, in a larger context and with their eyes on the economy of other lands covered in their works.

Since the publication of Rudolph Kjellen's classic work *Staten som Lifsforn* (The State as a Living Form) in 1916 and Dr. Karl Hausofer's contributions on geopolitics, many western scholars have turned their attention to geopolitical studies of the historical developments of their respective countries. In India, barring a short general sketch by the late Sardar K.M. Pannikar, no attempt has so far been made to undertake a study of the main currents of medieval Indian history in the

light of Geopolitics. It needs hardly to be emphasized that there are many aspects and problems of medieval Indian history which would assume a new dimension and an altogether different perspective if analysed from that angle. Why was the fate of the Delhi kingdoms linked up with the economic stability of the Doab ? How far were the administrative institutions of the medieval Indian governments determined by 'Space' conditions ? Why did all dynastic changes during the medieval period take the form of city revolutions ? Why did, during the middle ages, the establishment of a kingdom within the confines of Hindustan signify its vigour and its subsequent extension into the Deccan its dismemberment and ruin ? These and similar other problems need an analysis in the light of geopolitics, indicating the general dependence of history, particularly in its military aspects, upon geographical conditions. But even in this field the historian is expected to distinguish between a *conditioning* and a *determining* influence. Too enthusiastic an acceptance of the geographical interpretation should be avoided as the environmental factors decrease with the advance of civilization enabling man to subdue nature to his own purposes.

A word about the source material, before I close. Medieval India is rich in source material which is varied and prolific no doubt, but unfortunately no historiographical scrutiny has so far been made to determine its value, utility and reliability. We have used the medieval chronicles without understanding the mind of those who compiled them. Unless the subjective elements in a historian's approach—his social and religious prejudices, cultural associations and ideological background—are clearly and accurately enquired into, the data supplied by him cannot be helpful in any scientific evaluation. What were their basic procedures of collecting and assessing evidence ? How did they interpret the processes of historical change ? To what factors did they attribute the rise and fall of Empires and how did their views in this respect influence their collection and presentation of data ? What were their main categories of political thought and what were the different interests represented in their political systems ?

These and similar questions when carefully tackled in the light of the contemporary literature help us in understanding the spirit of the age and its problems. But this does not mean that we can blindly apply 20th century principles of historical criticism to works produced several centuries back. The literature of every country and, in fact, of every age has its roots in the attitudes and tradition of the people who produced it and can be scrutinized only in the light of their own conceptual framework. Application of the *apparatus criticus* meant for the Persian chronicles to the Sanskrit or the Hindi literature of the period would hardly be rewarding. To the Sanskrit or the Hindi sources one should go not so much for the historical data but for a glimpse of the "spirit of the age" so vital for understanding a period and its basic problems. For instance the works of Vidyapati help us in understanding the atmosphere of Jaunpur under the Sharqis. His *Kirtilata* takes us to the market place, the temples and the court of Jaunpur and when we have finished it, we have a feeling as if we have been involved in the life of the period itself.

In the Muslim historiography of medieval India the Arab and the Persian traditions are clearly distinguishable. The Persian concept of historiography—a legacy from Sassanid times as it was, reeled round the king and the sceptre, and viewed any reference to the workers, peasants, artisans or the commonalty as derogatory to the art of history-writing. The Arab historians, who believed in writing the history of an epoch, recorded the minutest details about the life of the people. Abul Fazl made a distinct contribution to Persian historiography by infusing in it the spirit of Arab historiography. In his works the king is no doubt the central figure—the pivot of the whole system—but the common people also find their due place in the narrative, "men live and move before us, and the great questions of the time, axioms then believed in and principles then followed, phantoms then chased after, ideals then prevailing and successes then obtained, are placed before our eyes in truthful and therefore vivid colours". His was an unique experiment in historiography and, as even foreign scholars have accepted, nothing at all resembling his *A'in-i*



*Akbarnama* was ever compiled in Asia or Europe. Some 13 years before the French Revolution, when France was witnessing great financial crisis, Le Pere Tieffentaller published extracts from the rent rolls given in the *A'in*. But Abul Fazl did not formulate the main tradition of medieval Indian historiography as the historical writings and political chronicles of the period remained mostly imbued with the Sassanid traditions.

This shortcoming of the political chronicles can be obviated by a recourse to non-political literature, particularly the *mafiyat* of the medieval Muslim saints. Through them we get a glimpse of medieval society, in all its variety, if not in all its fulness—the moods and tensions of the common man, the inner yearnings of his soul, the religious thought at its higher and lower levels, the popular customs and manners and above all the problems of the people in general. Since in this literature the historical landscape is surveyed from the point of view of a common man, it also acts as a corrective to the impressions created by the political chroniclers. The picture of general economic prosperity during the reign of Firuz Shah Tughluq, as drawn by Barani and 'Afif, is contradicted by the accounts of *Khair-ul-Majalis* wherein Shaikh Nasir-u'd-din Chiragh expresses his concern at the rise in prices and the resultant misery of the common man. Most probably Barani and 'Afif had the upper classes in view who were the people according to them, and who really counted. Barani's narrative leaves upon one's mind the impression that 'Ala-u'd-din Khalji's market control was the outcome of the militaristic requirement of the age, but his confidant and *Kalid dar-t-Kaushak* Qazi Hamid told a mystic gathering in Awadh that the Sultan was guided by altruistic consideration also. In *Futuh al-Firoz Shahi* religious considerations are given for abolishing certain taxes but the *Sarur-us-Sadur* shows that some of the professions on which tax was abolished had already become non-lucrative. We know from the *Tabaqat-i-Akbari* and *Ferishta* that during his governorship of Kara 'Ala-u'd-din Khalji had visited Khwaja Karak and had sought his blessings ; it is in the pages of *Asrar-ul-Makhdumin* that we get a glimpse of the life of Kara under the Khalji Sultan ;

details of Timur's invasion are found in political chroniclers but it is in the *malfuz* of Shaikh Ahmad Maghribi that we can feel the atmosphere that prevailed in Delhi before and after the Timurian holocaust. Such pieces of information in the *malfuz* literature, though often brief and laconic, light up the historical panorama of a whole epoch. If carefully edited texts of *malfuzats* like *Ahsan-ul-Aqwal* (*malfuz* of Shaikh Burhan-ud-din Gharib), *Siraj-ul-Hidaya* (*malfuz* of Shaikh Jalal u'd-din Bukhari Makhdum-i-Jahanian), *Sarur-us-Sadur* (*malfuz* of Shaikh Hamid-u'd-din Sufi), *Durrar-i-Nizamiya* (*malfuz* of Shaikh Nizam-ud-din Auliya) and the *malfuz* of Shaikh Salim Chishti are made available, it will be helpful towards understanding the life and thought of the people of India during the medieval period.

The poetic literature of the period also needs a more careful study from the historiographical point of view than has hitherto been made. A poet's soul records like a seismograph the mental and emotional climate of a period. The poetry of the Khalji period breathes an atmosphere of buoyancy, confidence and hope; the poetic literature produced under the Tughluqs is soaked in pessimism and frustration; the poetical works of Akbar's reign reveal an atmosphere of intellectual freedom and cosmopolitanism and mirror the spiritual and moral urges of the age. Scores of *diwans* of the poets of Akbar's court, available in manuscript, await the historian's attention. It is not merely in understanding the spirit of an age that this poetic literature is helpful, it supplies some valuable information about the social and political history of the period also. In his masnavi *Sahifat-ul-Ausaf* addressed to Prince Juna (the future Muhammad bin Tughluq) with whom the poet had gone to Deogir, Amir Khusrau gives a very graphic and interesting account of Deogir and thereby tacitly suggests to him the possibilities of developing it as a southern capital. He calls it a 'paradise on earth' and praises its air, fruits, precious stones, cloth, music and the physical charm of its people. It is difficult to visualize a more forceful advocacy for Deogir and as we go through its delectable verses our mind inevitably establishes some sort of connection between

Khusrau's visit to Deogir with Juna Khan and the latter's subsequent attempt to make it a second capital of the Empire. But for Badr-i-Chach we would have thought that in 1326 Delhi was completely deserted as a result of Muhammad bin Tughluq's Deccan experiment. No where do we find such a vivid and interesting account of life in the academic institutions of medieval Delhi as in the *diwan* of Mutahhar. Every estimate of Bairam Khan, Khan-i-Khanan will remain incomplete unless it takes into account the *diwan* of Bairam which brings to light those aspects of his personality which have been ignored by the political chroniclers.

A search for and a critical study of the large number of Sanskrit works translated into Persian during the Mughal period, particularly during the reign of Akbar, is a great desideratum. Akbar's choice of titles for translation was determined not merely by personal curiosity but by a keen desire to familiarize the Muslim intelligentsia with the Hindu religious thought. The movement initiated by Akbar flowered under Dara Shukoh who has the unique credit of introducing the philosophy of the *Upanishads* to Europe. Apart from religious literature, many Sanskrit works on arts and sciences were translated during this period but unfortunately not even a catalogue of these works has yet been prepared.

In a vast country like India where the historical data is so diverse and multi-lingual, regional histories are an important adjunct to our study of medieval Indian history and culture. The regional historian is in a better position to tap all the available literature in local languages and dialects. But all such studies should help in providing an integrated picture of the total Indian scene and should not try to take out the history of any particular region from the main stream of Indian life.

If search is made for material pertaining to medieval Indian history in countries which had political, cultural or commercial contact with the Delhi Sultanate or the Mughal Empire, the efforts will be amply rewarded. The recent discovery of the Genzia records of Cairo which a few decades back the

British Museum catalogue could dismiss as : "Business letters and therefore valueless", has thrown valuable light on trade relations between India and the Mediterranean countries from Hama to Tangiers during the medieval period. There are references in them to more than 400 different occupations. The information about Indian imports and exports found in these documents is extremely revealing and valuable. Six varieties of iron and steel, 12 types of brass and bronze vessels, and several types of textiles, particularly Indian muslin referred to as *lanis* and *lalis*, occur in the export lists, besides timber, spices, aromatics etc. It appears from these Documents that there was great cooperation between the Hindu, Muslim, Jewish and Christian merchants. The formation of an international merchant organization known as *Karim* was inspired by the example of the Indian merchants. (In Tamil *Karyam* means business).

A good deal of material relevant to medieval India can also be found in Turkish libraries and archives like the Mughal-Ottoman correspondence of which only a fragment has been published by Faridun Bek.

It is interesting to note that valuable work is, at present, being done on different aspects of medieval Indian history at London, McGill, Columbia and Tokyo. The London School of Oriental and African Studies is bringing out a comprehensive volume of Documents on medieval India ; the Tokyo University has completed three volumes on the monuments of Delhi. Some sort of contact with the outside institutions interested in medieval Indian history would be useful by way of exchange of views and materials. It would be enlightening to know something about the material frameworks and tools of analysis at their disposal and their applicability to our problem of research and scholarship. Historians should be continuously and simultaneously engaged in analysis and synthesis. But, as the great French historian, Fustel de Coulanges once observed : "Years of analysis is required for a day of synthesis."

## *Trends in Indian Historiography\**

Modern Indian historiography owes its beginning to British scholars who, soon after the occupation of the country applied their mind to the study of the history, society and culture of India in the light of their imperialistic needs. While no honest assessment can ignore the contribution made by these British historians to preserve the historical literature, records and relics of India, it is also undeniable that their colonial interests determined their approach to history. Sir Henry Elliot's idea in placing the historical literature of medieval India before the people was to "make our native subjects more sensible of the immense advantages accruing to them under the mildness and equity of our rule". (I p. XXII). He, therefore, blackened the Indian *past* to glorify the British *present* and used medieval Indian history as an instrument for the implementation of the formula '*counterpoise of Indians against Indians*', evolved by the British Army Commission. Sir Henry Elliot's Memorandum to the Home Government makes his motives abundantly clear. He had a proud consciousness of "our high destiny as the rulers of India" and was confident that if the "tyranny and

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\*Presidential Address delivered at the Second session of the Indian History and Culture Society, Delhi 1979.

capriciousness of the despotic rulers" of medieval India was discussed in that way, it would make the Indians shudder at their past and hail the British regime as a blessing. 'We should no longer', wrote Elliot, "hear bombastic Babus, enjoying under our government the highest degree of personal liberty, and many more political privileges than were ever conceded to a conquered nation, rant about patriotism. If they would dive into any of the volumes mentioned herein,...(they would) learn that in the days of that dark period for whose return they sigh, even the bare utterance of their ridiculous fantasies would have been attended, not by silence and contempt but with the severer discipline of molten lead or empalement. We should be compelled to listen no more to the clamours against resumption of rent-free tenures. . . ." In his attempt to serve the imperialistic needs of the British government in India, Sir Henry Elliot blurred our historical perspective and, by his subtle insinuations, poisoned the springs of our national life. For generations these volumes have been the basis of countless text books on Indian history and the virus so imperceptibly injected by Elliot has dangerously effected the ideology of three generations. The fact that the 'bombastic Babus' were clamouring not for the return of the middle ages but for advance into a 'newer age' was, of course, quite unintelligible to an Anglo-Indian administration of Elliot's type.

Notwithstanding a serious complaint made by Rhys Davids in the early 20th century that in spite of half a century of University Education Indians had not made any worthwhile contribution to the history of India, it is a fact that during the first three decades of the present century, Indian historians like Shibli, J.N. Sarkar, Zaka-ullah Bhandarkar, Ranade, Sulaiman Nadvi, Tara Chand, Mohd. Habib, Haroon Khan Sherwani, R.P. Tripathi and others produced works which were characterized by freshness of approach and succeeded considerably in divesting Indian history of the communal bias which imperialist historians had introduced in it.

With the dawn of freedom Indian historiography entered another phase but as an unfortunate concomitant of the

Partition of the country, historical works of the sub-continent assumed communal overtones. Inevitable as this reaction was, it was bound to be short-lived and transitory. As Indian historiographical studies were pulling out of this situation, a slogan was raised 'no theory, no history' and the trappings of an imported ideology were sought to be imposed on Indian historical studies. There is no harm if different theories of history are used as tools for interpreting the historical data from different angles, but when, in the fashion of medieval orthodoxy wherein every religion claimed to be the sole custodian of true faith and dubbed all others as misguided, the advocates of the new theory started claiming that they alone represented the correct historical approach and that all others were either incompetent, or communalists or reactionaries, it posed a threat to intellectual freedom. Most of the writers thus condemned were neither incompetent, nor reactionaries; their only fault was that they did not subscribe to their ideology as an article of faith. The Marxist theory of history is, no doubt, interesting and thought-provoking but to dub all other approaches as 'unscientific' is fraught with dangerous consequences of curtailing freedom of enquiry, investigation and interpretation. Every country has its own historiographical traditions and the source material is ultimately rooted in the attitudes and traditions of the people who produced it and can be scrutinized only in the light of their own conceptual framework. To ignore all this and to regiment historical thought to revolve round and investigate only class-struggle and to concentrate on economic aspects to the exclusion of all other equally, if not more, important aspects of religion, culture, thought and traditions is tantamount to distortion of Indian history. Emile Durkheim's view that religion is the source of superior culture fully applies to India. If the history of a country which has been the cradle of religions and where *rishis*, *bhagats*, *gurus*, *sufis* and saints have toiled to inculcate moral and spiritual ideals and have looked down upon materialistic pursuits, is sought to be interpreted in terms of economic needs only, the urges and aspirations of the Indian people, nay even their *psyche* and the direction of

their thought, can never be properly understood. The situation becomes alarmingly disturbing when the props of a political organization are provided for propagation of the ideology.

In fact human life and activity cannot be explained merely in terms of the means of production. A variety of factors—religious, psychological, social, environmental and moral—influence human behaviour which is a complex phenomena of actions and reactions to different situations. To peg human personality and all its motivations round its economic needs is sustainable neither psychologically nor sociologically. Max Weber rightly disagrees with the view that everything originates from material factors. History is, and should be, concerned with the totality of human experience in space and time. Then alone a complete picture of society and a correct perspective of history can emerge. History may or may not be a biography of individuals ; it is no doubt a biography of nations and civilizations which like individuals have a 'memory', perpetuating its needs, its traditions and even its mistakes, as also its aspirations and ideals. Chateaubriand once remarked : "The Greeks would not have liked an Egyptian temple at Athens any more than the Egyptians would have liked a Greek temple at Memphis. These two monuments, moved from their own milieu, would have lost their chief beauty, that is there connection with the institutions and habits of the people." The same is true of the historical traditions of a country. You remove them from their context and their significance is lost. Instruments of production do influence living conditions but social system and ideological apparatus are also potent factors in shaping the direction of human efforts. Attempts of some scholars to divert historical studies into parochial channels of ideological commitment, reminds one of the fear that Lord Morley once expressed about historical studies in his day. He wrote : "There have been signs in our day of its (conception of history) becoming narrow, pedantic and trivial. It threatens to degenerate from a broad survey of great periods and movements of human societies into vast and countless accumulations of insignificant facts, sterile knowledge, and frivolous antiquarianism, in which



the spirit of epochs is lost, and the direction, meaning and summary of the various courses of human history all disappear."

It was sometime in early thirties that the late Professor Mohammad Habib observed : "The history of India, as Indian have understood it, is the study of her religious and cultural movements." In a subsequent work he has thus explained his view : "Religion had, at the great turning points of history in the past, been the chief instrument for this ideological revolution. In this lies its real value. The Marxist condemnation of religion as a whole is no longer necessary. We have to discriminate with reference to time and circumstances. There have been progressive adventures of human society which religion alone could undertake." What is going to happen to Indian history if all discussions of religion are made a taboo and all historical phenomena is seen and explained in terms of dialectical materialism.

Quantification of data is valuable as means for checking conclusions based on other sources, but is not the only tool for historical formulations. Human behaviour does not lend itself to quantitative analysis and to repeated re-examination under identical conditions, and therefore all generalizations are unreliable. Marxism, as Finley has said, distorts human behaviour by reducing it to a monistic theory. Societies display both conflict and consensus and a truthful record should present both these aspects of human conduct.

Similarly any unilinear delineation of historical developments in India through the centuries is neither proper nor justifiable because human thought, as also the society, moves in ascents and descents. At times Marxist tools of analysis have been helpful in studying particular aspects of Indian history e.g. the British economic exploitation of India and the role of 'Indian tribute' in the industrialization of Britain. But this does not mean that the historical development of modern India has all along been unilinear. If there have been peasant revolts

there have also been socio-religious reactions to the expansion of Western religious and cultural ethos.

Likewise patterning the history of India as one of 'orthodoxy' and 'liberalism' or religious commitment and secularism is basically unsound. The whole thesis leads to a wrong assumption that if in a society there is an increase of activity in the direction of the secular pole, there must be a corresponding decrease of energy in the direction of the religious pole. It is incorrect to hold, remarks Hexter, that 'the flow of social energy in the direction of any such pole can take place only by way of subtraction from the flow of energy to the opposite pole.' Commenting on Polard's *Factors in Modern History*, he has very correctly observed : 'If we adopt (the polar view).. we court confusion...Although between the opposed members of each (pair) there is tension, the issue is never *either or* ; it is always *more or less* . .the question is never how one can annihilate the other ; it is how to strike a viable balance between them, how under varying conditions to work out even anew the terms of adjustment and reconciliation''

Permanent categorization and labelling of men and movements thwarts understanding of their real role in history. In fact, no individual, or group or sect can be permanently placed in any such category. For instance, Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi and his school of thought is labelled as representing orthodoxy but it is completely forgotten that one of his spiritual descendants, Mirza Mazhar Jan-i Janan gave evidence of great spiritual virility and dynamism when he included the Hindus among *ahl-i Kitab* and declared the Vedas to be a revealed Book. Dara Shukoh, the greatest exponent of liberal thought in his day, pays eloquent tribute to Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi, something which modern critics of Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi can hardly explain or understand. In fact while looking back at the past we should not inject our present day prejudices and predilections. The concept of orthodoxy or liberalism which we have today may not have existed then with the same implications. Liberty was one thing in nineteenth century France, and quite another in fifth century Athens. Let not

our modern concepts be projected in the study of the past. Past should be judged in the context of the past.

I may be permitted to cite a couple of examples to illustrate how distortion may follow even from partial or incomplete data :

To say that Mahmud of Ghazni attacked India for economic reasons is correct but it is a distortion if the statement ends here. One has to add that he destroyed Indian temples. But this also does not complete the picture. It must be added that his contemporary saint Abul Hasan Bulani refused to accept gold from Somnath because he thought that the campaign was not in consonance with the teachings of the Prophet. The picture of Mahmud will be complete only when it is also added that the famous Persian poet Sa'di considered Mahmud avaricious and greedy and that his contemporary Alberuni remarked that Mahmud's invasions created bitterness against Islām in Indian mind. Any attempt to suppress any of these aspects would distort history and prevent correct assessment.

Akbar was doubtless a ruler with a broad vision who sought to establish an Indian empire on the identity of political and economic interests. But why suppress the significance of Rana Pratap's struggle against him or refuse to understand the viewpoint of the Raushanias. Akbar's efforts to give a really Indian character to the Mughal Empire were laudable but why suppress the fact that his attempt to assume the role of religious leadership was resented both by the Hindus and the Muslims, more by the Muslims as they saw grave danger to their faith in his religious experiments.

Similarly, while highlighting Aurangzeb's attitude towards the Shias, the fact should be stated that out of his 4 *wazirs*, 3 were Shias and one was a Hindu !

Examples may be multiplied. What is needed is a total picture of men and movements without injecting any bias or without introducing any pre-fabricated theories to justify or malign their actions.

Indian historical scholarship has to reiterate its commitment to truth and nothing but truth and all considerations of theories—and their propagation to sustain any approach should be discarded. It is not objectionable to have an approach or even a natural sympathy with the subject, but deliberate distortions to suit theories have to be rejected. Every writer should be free to view the historical landscape from whatever angle he wishes to and so long as he is truthful and has no axe to grind he should be heard with patience. Let a thousand flowers bloom in the field of historical research and investigation for therein lies the future of Indian historical studies.

Freedom has brought new facilities of historical research and vast treasures of source material are now coming to light. Our accent has rightly shifted from the rulers and the ruling dynasties to the *people*. This is in keeping with the new democratic urges in the country. There should be an all-out effort to make it possible for every research scholar to reach the source material without difficulty. The recent discovery of Geniza records has brought to light new aspects of Indian involvement in international trade. The formation of an international trading corporation known as *karim* (In Tamil *karyam* means business) in which Hindus, Arabs, Christians, Jews and others were involved was an interesting experiment in international trade. The information about Indian imports and exports found in these documents is extremely revealing and valuable. Six varieties of iron and steel, 12 types of brass and bronze vessels and several types of textiles, particularly Indian muslin referred to as *lanis* and *lalis* appear in the export lists, besides timber, spices, aromatics etc.

The Goan Archives are full of interesting source material about the activities of the Portuguese and the reactions of Indian powers to their commercial and colonial ventures. The Arsathas in Rajasthan Archives and hundreds of thousand of *faramin* and official documents in Andhra Pradesh Archives await calendaring. Records available in regional languages have to be brought to light and systematically used. In a vast country

like India where the historical data is so diverse and multi-lingual, regional histories are an important adjunct to our study of Indian history and culture. The regional historian is in a better position to tap all the available literature in local languages and dialects. But all such studies should help in providing an integrated picture of the total Indian scene and should not try to take out the history of any particular region from the mainstream of Indian life. Macro and micro studies of Indian society should proceed hand in hand, checking and testing the generalizations on the basis of regional studies. For instance, Bernier's account of the agrarian scene of India is not fully corroborated by some agrarian studies pertaining to Rajasthan and Golconda.

It is necessary for Indian historical scholarship to establish closer contact with South-East Asian and West Asian countries for an extended Asiatic view of our history. It will provide the conspectus necessary for understanding the interaction of cultural forces. For instance, a number of foreign teams of Archaeologists are working in Syria but there is no Indian participation in them. A careful study of these sites would bring many interesting aspects of Indian cultural influences to light. The civilizations which flourished on the Euphrates, the Nile, the Indus and the Ganges have to be studied in depth and detail. Besides, the libraries of West Asian countries have to be intensively consulted to assess how much material is available there having a bearing on Indian history and culture. The history of the Delhi Sultanate begins from the 12th century when there was a general gloom and frustration prevailing in Indian society. This has made many scholars oblivious of the achievements of Indian scholarship in the earlier centuries and its impact on Arab lands. I may be permitted to quote from my work on the thirteenth century :

“This gloomy picture of Indian society in the 11th and 12th centuries should not however, make one oblivious of the intellectual achievements of Hinduism in the preceding ages. Long before the advent of the Turks,

Hindu contributions in the sphere of mathematics, astronomy, toxicology, chemistry, medicine, astrology, parables and politics had attracted the attention of the Arabs and large number of Sanskrit works on these subjects had been translated into Arabic. This glorious intellectual heritage of India was, however, not open to the Indian masses in the 11th and 12th centuries. The Musalmans brought with them, besides their own sciences, many of the sciences which they had initially borrowed from the Hindus." (p. 74)

A study of the Arab literature would facilitate evaluation of the impact of Indian scholarship on Arab lands and *vice versa*. South East Asian countries have also much to contribute to an understanding of the history of Indian cultural relations with Malaysia and Indonesia.

This is time that a concerted effort is made to organize, calendar and catalogue material which is available in India and to take stock of what is of value for our history in South East Asian and West Asian countries. With increasing UNESCO interest in such studies, a venture of this type would be fully rewarding. Let us hope that our efforts would one day help us in viewing Indian history and culture in all its aspects and free from all sorts of distortions and misrepresentations.

Attention may be drawn to risks involved in translation of terms and concepts. If in translations we are not able to adhere to the original connotation, historical thinking will get blurred and it would be difficult to correct the impressions later. The use of English terms for Indian institutions which developed in a different background hinders clear understanding of many institutions. Original terms should be explained carefully but use of equivalents should be avoided. A number of misconceptions about Mughal administration have arisen from ignorance of the original connotation of terms. One instance would suffice. Economic historians often use the term *aimah dar* for stipend holders and consider the word *aimah* to be plural of *imam*, religious leader. In fact the term is

*yema* not *a'ima*. In the Turkish language *yema* means "daily bread or allowance."

An atmosphere of intellectual freedom, respect for every genuine point of view and sincere effort to view the history and culture of India in a broad historical perspective alone can lead to a coherent conception of the imperatives of historical understanding. History is essentially a quest for truth and Truth being a value in itself cannot be subordinated to any other value, however impressive or sacrosanct.

## *Some Recent Studies of Islam in the Indian Environment\**

In his Foreword to *Modern Trends in Islam*, Sir Hamilton Gibb has remarked : “In these days, when we are enveloped in an atmosphere charged with propaganda, it is the duty of every investigator to define precisely to himself and to his audience the principles which determine his point of view”.<sup>1</sup> This is a sound advice of a veteran scholar but instead of defining my “point of view” I would rather try to co-relate this brief survey to certain basic facts of Indian history—facts which, I feel, have great relevance to the content and conspectus of religious studies as they have developed during the last few decades. In commenting on some of the underlying issues relating to the historical treatment of the religious dimensions of Indian history, I shall confine myself to Islam in the Indian environment. This, in fact, means touching some sensitive areas and covering some delicate ground.

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\*Presented at a Seminar on the “Study of Religion in Indian Universities” at Bangalore, September 4, 1967.

1. *Modern Trends in Islam*. pp. X-XI.



(1) The processes of historical change in India are inexplicable without an insight into the religious forces and movements. "Our history", remarked Dr. Rabindranath Tagore some 65 years back, "is that of our social life and attainment of spiritual ideals".<sup>1</sup> (2) The religious content of Indian society is basically pluralistic. Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, Christianity, Zoroastrianism and Sikhism all have contributed to its religious and cultural complex. (3) In the course of centuries, different religious communities of India have tried to evolve a common cultural outlook, or what Babur called a 'Hindustani way of life,' but the desire to maintain their religious identity has, nevertheless, remained supreme. This desire for identity has been least active in Hinduism, for Hinduism is not a religion in the sense of some fixed or rigid dogma. It is a "civilization process" or in the words of Tagore : "a United States of a social federation, whose common name is Hinduism".<sup>2</sup> It is consequently prepared to accept and assimilate every type of religious concept and is never afraid of losing its identity. (4) Islam's first contact with India was through the Arab traders who had their colonies all along the western coast of India. To the efforts of these merchants may be ascribed the formation of the earliest community of the Indian Musalmans. Commercial and other considerations had made them a very welcome culture-group in Indian society. They had perfect freedom to perform their religious rites and live their own community life under the Hindu rulers. Muslim judges, known as *hunarman*, decided their cases.<sup>3</sup> "Bearded men in longskirted tunics, congregating for prayers at fixed intervals, in a rectangular building which contained no idols, and adhering to no caste rules, presented a sight whose novelty wore off with the passage of time. As they established colonies and multiplied, they became an integral part of the population,"

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1. *Nationalism*, Macmillan & Co., London 1936, p. 6.

2. *ibid.*, p. 115.

3. Mas'udi, *Muruj-uz-Zahab*, II, pp. 85-86.

remarks Dr. A.B.M. Habibullah.<sup>1</sup> This image of Islam which the Arab traders had projected on the Indian mind underwent a complete change when the Turkish military operations started. Alberuni's sensitive mind immediately registered the change.<sup>2</sup> Subsequently Muslim political power was established over the country. Thus Islam came to be identified in India with the possession of political power. As a natural consequence Hindu mind could not separate Islam from the political domination of the Muslims; the Muslim mind could not measure the success or failure of Islam except in terms of its political achievements. The movement for Pakistan carried in the name of Islam confirmed this impression. Political Islam thus became an anathema to Hindu mind. (5) A number of foreigners—the Greeks, Scythians, Mongolians and Parthians — — came to India and a few generation after their settlement became completely Hinduized in name, speech, manners, religion, dress, and ideas. They got merged in the vaster Indian civilization. This assimilative process of Hindu civilization had its difficulties with reference to Muslims. "The Muslims came to India," observes Sir Jadunath Sarkar, "as a new element which the older inhabitants could not absorb ...Islam is a fiercely monotheistic religion. Hence the absorption of the Indo-Muslims in the fold of Hinduism by recognizing Allah as another of the numberless incarnations of Vishnu and Muhammad as an inspired sadhu, was impossible . . . The Hindus were willing to absorb the Muslims; they wrote the *Allohanishad* and went perilously near making an *avatar* of the Emperor Akbar. But the Muhammadans would not yield on the cardinal points of their faith, nor accept the few conventions necessary for entering Hindu society."<sup>3</sup> This assimilative tendency of Hindu culture created many fear-complexes for Muslim identity. Thus it is round *politically assertive* Islam and *culturally assimilative* Hinduism that tensions have grown and have acted and reacted on religious

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1. *Foundation of Muslim Rule in India*, Second Revised Edition, Allahabad 1961, p. 1.
  2. *Alberuni's India*, tr. E. C. Sachau, London 1914, I, p. 22.
  3. *India Through the Ages*, Third Edition, Calcutta 1950, p. 41.

and historical approaches. (6) If the history of the development of Muslim religious thought in the Indian milieu is surveyed as a whole, it would appear that broadly speaking there have been three tendencies—which one might call the *repelling*, the *assimilative* and the *moderating* forces in Indian cultural life. One trend was basically syncretic, with a liberal approach towards Hindu thought and institutions ; the other, essentially separatist, eschewed all forms of social and ideological synthesis. Saints like Amir Khusrau, Sayyid Muhammad Ghauth of Gwaliyor, Shah Muhibbullah of Allahabad, Miyan Mir, Mulla Shah and Mirza Mazhar and rulers and princes like Akbar and Dara Shukoh, represent a tradition which sought to construct an ideological bridge between Islam and Hinduism. Amir Khusrau declared<sup>1</sup> :

نہست ہندو ارچہ کہ دیندار چوما  
ہست بسے جائے باقرار چوما

(Though the Hindu is not a believer like me ; he nevertheless, believes in many things in which I do).

The other trend of thought which looked askance at this synthesis was represented by Sayyid Muhammad Gisu Daraz of Gulbarga, Shaikh Ahmad of Sirhind, Khwaja Muhammad Ma'sum, Aurangzeb and Sayyid Ahmad Shahid. There were others like Shaikh Sharafuddin Yahya of Maner, Shaikh 'Ali Muttaqi of Gujarat, Shaikh Abdul Haqq Muhaddith of Delhi, Shah Waliullah of Delhi and Shah 'Abdul 'Aziz of Delhi, who strove to steer a middle course and advocated an attitude of *i'tidal* (moderation) and *tawazun* (balance). Whatever one might feel, the real picture of Indo-Muslim thought can be seen only in the total activity of all these three tendencies. Through a process of action and reaction they have become so intertwined that no unilinear delineation of these trends in any historical assessment can be scientifically sustained. With the partition of the country, however, a tension has appeared in the sphere of religious thought. The Pakistani accent on

1. *Nuh Siphr*, ed. Mohammad Wahid Mirza, Oxford University Press, Calcutta 1950, p. 163.

and appropriation of only one religious tradition—the tradition characterized by the spirit of isolation—has affected the Indian mind where a tendency is developing to look askance at that part of the tradition and ultimately to eliminate it from the Indian heritage. All men are more or less the product of their environment and no movement can be appreciated if it is torn out of its space-time context. Even orthodoxy and liberalism have sometimes supplementary and complementary functions to perform in a broader framework of social development. Too much emphasis by the scholars of Pakistan on the separatist traditions and exclusive appropriation of some Muslim leaders of thought as the forerunners of the idea of Pakistan is tantamount to disowning the other equally important and dynamic trend of thought and traditions. Indian Islam cannot afford a partition of cultural and religious traditions.

With this brief reference to factors that have led to the crystallization of attitudes in the study of religion in Indian history, a few major studies on the subject may be considered.

Perhaps first in this survey comes Prof. Mohammad Habib's Introduction to Elliot and Dowson's *History of India*.<sup>1</sup> His study of 'the principles of the Islamic Social order' and the 'Position of Islamic Revolution in World History' is characterized by deep insight into the processes of historical change. He, has, however, used the principles of Dialectical Materialism to explain the role of Islam in India and world history. The Prophet has been presented as a 'revolutionist' and Medina as a working class republic under him. The Muslim concept of the "finality of Prophethood" has been thus explained: 'Every Prophet brings his own *Shari'at* or law: the law of the 'classless society' is the last *Shari'at*; and there can be no new *Shari'at*'. Referring to the establishment of Muslim rule in northern India during the 13th century, he

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1. Elliot & Dowson's *History of India*, Vol. II, reprinted with Introduction by Professor M. Habib and Supplement by K. A. Nizami, Cosmopolitan Publishers, Aligarh 1952, pp. 1-102.

remarks: "Face to face with the social and economic provisions of the and *Shari'at* the Hindu *Smritis* as practical alternatives, the Indian city worker preferred the *shari'at*. And the decision of the city worker was decisive". Developing his thesis further he remarks: "Viewed in a proper, scientific and non-communal perspective, in the context of world history and of future Indian history, the so-called Ghorian conquest of India was really a revolution of Indian city labour led by the Ghorian Turks".<sup>1</sup>

Professor Habib's attempt to assess the progressive role of religion with the help of Marxist tools of enquiry and interpretation is, in fact, unique and one is simply amazed at the ease with which he develops his thesis. Following the Marxist approach, he remarks : Every society will have the following : *instruments of production, a social system and an ideological apparatus*. "Religion", he then proceeds, "had, at the great turning points of history in the past, been the chief instrument for this ideological revolution. In this lies its real value. The Marxist condemnation of religion as a whole is no longer necessary. We have to discriminate with reference to time and circumstances. There have been progressive adventures of human society which religion alone could undertake".<sup>2</sup> It appears that while deeply impressed by the Marxist interpretation of history Professor Habib could not reconcile himself to the rejection of the role of religion in the development of society. This led him to the formula that his Marxism was *minus* violence *plus* God. How Marx would have reacted to this formula, is not difficult to imagine. But Dr. Peter Hardy has not followed the whole thrust of Prof. Habib's argument when he remarks : "The significant feature of Professor Habib's Marxist interpretation of medieval Indian history is not that Marxism has absorbed Islam but that Islam

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1. *Introduction*, op. cit. p. 32.

2. *Introduction*, op. cit. pp. 12-13.

3. *Historians of India, Pakistan and Ceylon*, edited by C. H. Philips, Oxford University Press, London 1961, p. 309.

has absorbed Marxism".<sup>8</sup> It was not a question of Islam absorbing Marxism or Marxism absorbing Islam; it was in fact a confession by a scholar who had studied Marxism very carefully that its application to medieval Indian History could only be partial and that without an understanding of religion it was not possible to explain the societal developments in India. This is, however, a position which the committed Marxist scholars can hardly accept. For them negation of the role of religion in the history of any people and any country is a pre-requisite to what they call 'scientific study of history.' Notwithstanding all this, it is undeniable that a scientific study of medieval India in the light of Marxist principles cannot go beyond what Prof. Habib has been able to do.

Dr. Wilfred Cantwell Smith has remarked in his thought-provoking work *'Islam in Modern History'* : "...the Pakistani and the Indian Muslims are equally successors to this past. Both have the same tradition between them. Culturally, each is full heir to the same heritage that was Indian Islam : it is available to either, to make what they may of it".<sup>1</sup> Two recent works—one by a Pakistani and the other by an Indian scholar—may illustrate what they have made of this historical heritage and what type of divergent attitudes are developing in the study of religion in the field of Indian history.

In 1962 appeared Dr. I.H. Qureshi's *"The Muslim Community of the Indo-Pakistan Sub-Continent"*<sup>2</sup> and just a few months back was released Professor Mohd. Mujeeb's *"The Indian Muslims"*.<sup>3</sup> Dr. Qureshi's work is characterized by a rare clarity of exposition and depth of understanding. He can wade through a maze of data with the ease of a trained historian. But he seems to be conscious all the time that as the foremost historian of Pakistan he had certain responsibilities. He has adopted 610 and 1947 as the terminal dates of

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1. *Islam in Modern History*, Mentor Books, New York 1959, p. 263.
  2. 'S. Gravenhage, 1962.
  3. London, 1967.

his study. It appears, however, that he worked out his theme not from 610 onwards, but from 1947 backwards. Professor Mohd. Mujeeb is a leading scholar of our country. His felicity of style makes his work fascinating reading. His anxiety to interview different types of Indian Muslims—scholars, poets, *'ulama*, sufis, administrators etc.—has forced a wide canvas on him. He paints and portrays over this vast canvas with the consummate skill of an artist. But if Dr. Qureshi worked his thesis from 1947 backwards, Professor Mujeeb looks back and forth, right and left, on the peripheries and in the centre in search of elements of identification with the Indian situation. Both of them have surveyed the same historical landscape but from two different angles. Professor Mujeeb gives to the subject of his study the title, "The Indian Muslims," an appellation which Dr. Qureshi considers inappropriate. "In their own language," observes Dr. Qureshi, "when they had to talk of themselves as distinct from the Muslims of other lands, they seldom used the appellation 'Indian Muslims'; the expression "Muslims of India" was more common. At no time has their sense of belonging to the larger world of Islam been weak and often it has been stronger than the sense of belonging to their habitat."<sup>1</sup> Dr. Qureshi looks upon orthodoxy as the protecting glacis of Islam in India and carefully works out Dr. Mohd. Iqbal's remark that "Liberalism act has a tendency to act as a force of disintegration."<sup>2</sup> Professor Mujeeb, on the contrary, holds that "the Muslim community was not integrated by orthodoxy; it wast aught to maintain its identity not through the spiritual and social values which it represented but through the cultivation of prejudices and claims to inherent superiority. Laying such foundations was worse than laying no foundations at all"<sup>3</sup> Both Professor Mujeeb and

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1. *The Muslim Community*, p. 86.

2. *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, Lahore Reprint 1944, p. 162.

3. *The Indian Muslims*, p. 80.

Dr. Qureshi have interpreted the history of the Muslim community in India in terms of orthodox and liberal trends.

It may be pointed out in this context that patterning of the history of Indian Islam as one of 'orthodoxy' and 'liberalism' is open to fundamental objections. As J.H. Hexter, commenting on Polard's *Factors in Modern History*, remarked about the historians' use of polarities in historical interpretation: "If we adopt this point of view...we court confusion. Although between the opposed members of each (pair) there is tension, the issue is *never* either-or; it is *always* more-or-less: the question—is never how one can annihilate the other; it is how to strike a viable balance between them, how under varying conditions to work out ever anew the terms of adjustment and reconciliation".<sup>1</sup> As this 'polar view' of history develops, we find Indian Islam being reduced into such hypothesis

Orthodoxy— —Identity—Medievalism

Liberalism— —Assimilation— —Secularism

This gives a straight line, no doubt, but human thought and society moves in slopes, curves, ascents and descents. Besides, this whole thesis leads to a wrong assumption that if in a society there is an increase of activity in the direction of the secular pole, there must be a corresponding decrease of energy in the direction of the religious pole. It is incorrect to hold, remarks Hexter, that "the flow of social energy in the direction of any one such pole can take place only by way of subtraction from the flow of energy to the opposite pole".

Perhaps 'orthodoxy' and 'liberalism' provided convenient pigeonholes to these scholars to sift their data and work out on this basis their theses in their own ways. In a recent study another polar pair—*Shuhudis* and *Wujudis*—has been invented to represent the orthodox and the liberal trends of thought, ignoring all together the fact that such categorization cannot be

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1. *Reappraisals in History*, p. 34.



sustained by actual historical data. For instance, Mirza Mazhar Jan-i-Jan, the greatest exponent of liberal thought in India, was a staunch believer in the doctrine of *Wahdat al-Shuhud*. In fact social phenomenon is more diverse and complicated and calls for a more uncommitted taxonomy to disentangle its various threads.

Barring this categorization, Dr. Qureshi and Prof. Mujeeb pursue their themes in opposite directions. What Dr. Qureshi has dismissed as cases of partial or incomplete conversion, Prof. Mujeeb selects as typical illustrations of the Indian Muslims. Then follows the process of appropriation and rejection of the traditions of Muslim religious thought in India. Before one has finished these two works, he can feel the deft hand of the historian at work in partitioning the religious heritage of Indian Islam.

The Bhartiya Vidya Bhawan has its own assessment of Islam in the framework of Indian history. Few cooperative works in India during the post-independence period have been undertaken with such zeal, efficiency and thoroughness as the Vidya Bhawan series of the 'History and Culture of the Indian People'. The treatment of Islam in these volumes however suffers from certain basic shortcomings. In the volume "The Struggle for Empire," Islam as a religion and philosophy has been dismissed in 3 pages in an extremely perfunctory manner.<sup>1</sup> The contributor of this small section, Dr. Wahid Mirza, has said nothing about Islamic faith or principles but simply given a few inaccurate sketches of mystics as the sole representatives of Islamic religious thought and philosophy. The General Editor, Dr. R.C. Majumdar, however, makes certain observations in a section on "Social Conditions." "The advent of Islam," he remarks "constituted the first great rift in the solidarity of Indian community since the incorporation of the aboriginal peoples into the Aryan society. Hence forth there were two communities in India—Hindu and Muslim—

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1. *The Struggle for Empire*, Bombay 1957, pp. 467-469.

2. *The Struggle for Empire*, p. 498.

who formed two entirely separate entities, so far at least as religious and social ideas and political and civil rights were concerned".<sup>1</sup> Further he remarks: "The inevitable result was that the Hindus and Muslims formed two distinct and hostile communities throughout the period under review."<sup>2</sup> It is significant that basically his point of view supports the entire thesis of Dr. I.H. Qureshi.

Two very fascinating studies of Islam in India have come from Professor Aziz Ahmad : *Studies in Islamic Culture in the Indian Environment*<sup>3</sup> and *Islamic modernism in India & Pakistan (1857-1964)*<sup>4</sup>. Prof. Aziz Ahmad has a rare gift of presentation and analysis. He holds that "the development of Islamic culture in India is as much a religious formulation of universal Islamic culture as a response to the tensions arising out of its tenacious persistence for survival; its fear of submergence and the compromises it made from time to time in the overwhelmingly non-Muslim environment of India." In keeping with this basic approach he has divided his book into two parts: the first deals with "Muslim India in relation to the Islamic world (710-1947)" and the second with "Muslim India in relation to Hindu India (710-1830)." The categorization itself speaks about the author's attitude. The dichotomy of the Indian Muslim into Indian and Muslim introduces another polar pair which Maulana Abul Kalam Azad<sup>5</sup> had rightly

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1. *The struggle for Empire* p. 498.

2. *ibid.*, p. 500.

3. Clarendon Press, Oxford 1964.

4. Oxford University Press, London 1967.

5. One cannot help being reminded of how Maulana Abul Kalam Azad had resolved this oft-spoken but unreal polarity :

"I am a Muslim and this thought fills me with pride. The traditions of Islam during its carer of thirteen centuries go to form my heritage. I am not willing to give up an iota of this portion. Islamic education, Islamic history, Islamic arts, Islamic Sciences, and Islamic Culture constitute the elements of my wealth; and as a Muslim, it is my duty to preserve it. Being a Muslim, I have a special position in cultural and religious circles, and I cannot bear that any one should interfere in this inner sanctum of my soul.

(Contd. on next page)

dismissed, in his Presidential Address at the Ramgarh Session, as absolutely irrelevant. The book has an epilogue entitled: "Modern Separatism." The work is, however, in the nature of essays written on different themes and lacks continuity of treatment which alone could provide a historical perspective for understanding the processes of acceptance, adjustment and resistance in Indian Islam. *The Islamic Modernism* is a more compact survey of the impact of the West on Indian Islam. The author has carefully evaluated the role of Sir Syed, Chiragh Ali, Iqbal and Abul Kalam Azad in the development of modernist trends in Islam. He has analysed also three theories of Islamic Socialism as profounded by Iqbal, Maulana 'Ubaid Ullah Sindhi and Maulana Hifzur Rahman. Recent trends in the Indian and Pakistani thought have also been explained. The author's perplexity seems to be what Dr. Wilfred Cantwell Smith has tersely put in the following words (and which the author himself has also quoted): "The fundamental *malaise* of modern Islam is a sense that something has gone wrong with Islamic history. The fundamental problem of modern Muslims is how to rehabilitate that history".

Recently some very interesting regional studies of Indian Islam have appeared. Reference may be made here to two studies pertaining to Bengal. Dr. A. Karim has, in his *Social History of the Muslims in Bengal*,<sup>1</sup> traced the developement of Muslim social and religious life in Bengal from the earliest times to 1538. "In this period" he remarks, "Islam, which came as a foreign religion, was integrated into the socio-religious system of the people, and while it won the general mass to its own ideal, many of the local customs, beliefs and

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But, in addition to these feelings, I am also the possessor of another, which has been created by the stark realities of my external life. The soul of Islam is not a barrier to this belief; in fact, it guides me in this path. I am proud to be an Indian. I am an integral part of this unified and impartible nation. The glory of this nation is incomplete without this valuable component. I am an essential factor in its composition and I shall never give up this claim.

1. Pakistan Historical Society, Karachi 1963.

practices stole into its fold and became recognized as the part and parcel of the local Muslim society.”<sup>1</sup>

Another work on Bengal is Dr. Mu‘inuddin’s *History of the Faraidi Movement* (1818-1906).<sup>2</sup> The Faraidi Movement was initially inspired by the spirit of Arab puritanism but in course of time got inseparably linked up with the socio-economic life of the Muslims of Bengal. Its rural pattern adds to its significance and brings to light the action and reaction of different forces to the acceptance of local customs and practices. The work is based on extensive search of material and provides an interesting insight into the history of Indian Islam, particularly in Bengal.

These studies bring to light the extent of Muslim identification with the local surroundings and are an important adjunct to our understanding of Islam in India.

In Urdu the religious studies in the field of Indian history are proceeding in very interesting and significant channels. The publication of two volumes—*Hindustan Arbon ki Nazar Main*<sup>3</sup> by the Dar-ul-Musannifin, Azamgarh, marks the beginning of a new trend—to divest Indian Islam of its political trappings and turn to the coastal areas where Islam first found its foothold as a religion. The publication of another book *Arab wa Hind Ahd-i-Risalat Main*<sup>4</sup> by the Nadwat-ul Musannifin Delhi, has added further momentum to that trend. The Azamgarh publication gives extracts (with introduction, translation and notes) from the accounts of Arab scholars and geographers, Jahiz, Sulaiman, Balazuri, Ya‘qubi, Mas‘udi, etc. regarding Indian culture and social life, economic activities and religious trends and the position of Muslims in this Indian environment. Qazi Athar Mubarakpuri has shown the relations of Islam with India during the time of the Prophet. These studies are silently shifting the gravitational point for the

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1. *ibid.*, p. VII.

2. Pakistan Historical Society, Karachi 1965.

3. Azamgarh 1960-62.

4. Delhi 1965.

study of Islam in India from the N.W. frontier to the Western coast of India and from Central Asia and Persia to Arabia and the Mediterranean countries.

Shaikh Muhammad Ikram has done outstanding work in Urdu on Indian Islam in its political and cultural aspects. His three volumes *Ab-i-Kauthar*,<sup>1</sup> *Mauj-i-Kauthar*<sup>2</sup> and *Rud-i-Kauthar*<sup>3</sup> are now more or less classics. Ikram's emotional commitments apart, his work is characterized by wide range of search, critical analysis and absorbing presentation. Another work which cannot possibly be ignored in any survey is Ghulam Rasul Mehr's comprehensive biography of Sayyid Ahmad Shahid and his *Jihad* movement. It has been said, and rightly too, that its publication marks a new stage in Urdu historiography.<sup>4</sup> Mehr's researches have given an anti-British orientation to a movement which was so long looked upon as directed against the Sikhs.

This brief survey gives an idea of the recent trends in the field of Indian history. Some of the tendencies that lie behind these interpretations have inherent dangers. The use of a rigid and prefabricated framework for stuffing facts which it can hardly hold amounts to distortion of historical perspective. If such straight jackets are used for the study of Islam in India, the future historian will forever thereafter be called upon to supply proof in support of this or that view, and it would never be possible for him to put the data otherwise and have a fresh and unbiassed look at the historical landscape. It is time that both polar and polemical views are discarded and categories that presuppose involvement are set aside. In the history of Islam in India, political Islam is only one of its many facets and it should not, therefore, constitute the only or the main axis for our studies. Likewise 'orthodoxy' was only one type of reaction to situations that evoked variety of responses. There were powerful sections of Muslim society

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1. Firoz Sons, Karachi 1952, Third Edition.
  2. Firoz Sons, Karachi, 1958, Second Edition.
  3. Firoz Sons, Karachi, 1968, Fourth Edition.
  4. W. C. Smith, *Islam in Modern History*, p. 52 n.

like the sufis—who looked upon the Sultanate as the negation of the true spirit of Islam and interpreted religion in broader terms and in larger perspective of human relationship. Then there were merchants and traders who hardly accepted any barrier—religious, social or linguistic. If concern for identity lulled response to a situation at one point, social necessity forced collaboration in a hundred other spheres. Similarly the impact of Islam on Indian culture was not limited to any single sphere; it hardly left any domain of life untouched. But the nature and pattern of give-and-take differed according to variations in the mental and emotional climates of the different areas.

## *A Historiographical Survey of Arabic and Persian Sources for the History of Kashmir\**

This paper aims at a synoptic overview of the literature available in Arabic and Persian on the history of Kashmir and seeks to assess its historiographical value. If we exclude the indigenous Persian historical literature produced during the 18th and 19th centuries, which in itself constitutes a category and deserves careful analysis of method and motivation, we find four distinct traditions determining the approach and content of the historical literature pertaining to Kashmir:

1. *The `Raja Tarangini Tradition*: Though written in Sanskrit, Kalhana's work<sup>1</sup> had deep impact on the historiographical traditions of Kashmir. It cut across the linguistic barriers and penetrated the Persian histories. For all histories

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\*Paper presented at a seminar on contemporary sources for the history of Kashmir at Srinagar on May 16, 1983.

1. English translation with Introduction and notes by Sir Aurel Stein, 2 Vols., London 1900.

of Kashmir, whether written in Sanskrit or Persian, and covering the period from earliest times to the middle of the 12th century, this is the only source of information and all historical studies have for centuries rotated round it.

2. *The West Asian Assessment:* The Arab scholars like Mas'udi<sup>1</sup> (ob. 957), Muqaddasi<sup>2</sup> and Idrisi<sup>3</sup> (ob. 1166) represent the West Asian view of Kashmir. Kufi's *Chach Nama*,<sup>4</sup> though available now in its Persian recension only, represents the same tradition. This literature touches only the fringes of Kashmir history and culture and does not contain any intimate view of the socio-economic structure of Kashmir.

3. *The Central Asian Appraisal:* The Central Asian appraisal of the history of Kashmir is contained in the Arabic work of Alberuni<sup>5</sup> and the Persian works of Rashid-ud-din Fazlullah,<sup>6</sup> Sharaf-ud-din Yazdi<sup>7</sup> and Mirza Haider Dughlat.<sup>8</sup> Unlike the West Asian view, it is characterized by a closer study of Kashmir life and so far as it goes it is comprehensive and informative. But the historical landscape of Kashmir is surveyed here more from Central Asian point of view than Indian. The main interest of these scholars lies in the history of the Buddhist creed and the situation created by Ilkhanid conversion to Islam.

4. *The Mughal approach:* The Mughal conquest of Kashmir

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1. *Kitab Muruj al-Zahab wa Ma'adin al-Jauhar*, Arabic text with French translation, by C. Barbier de Meynard and Pavet de Courteille, Paris, 1861-77.
  2. *Kitab Ahsan al-Ta'asim fi' Ma'rifat al-Aqalim*, edited by M.J. de Goeje, Leiden 1906.
  3. *Kitab Nuzhat Al-Mushtaq fi Khitraq Al-Afaq*, portion relating to India edited by S. Maqbul Ahmad, Aligarh 1954.
  4. Edited by Dr Daudpota, Delhi 1939. English translation by Mirza Kalichbeg Fredunbeg, Karachi 1900.
  5. *Alberuni's India*, translated by E.C. Sachau, London 1914.
  6. *Rashid al-Din's History of India*, ed. by Karl Jahn, Mouton & Co, 1965.
  7. *Zafar Namah*, edited by Maulvi Allahdad, Calcutta 1888.
  8. *Tarikh-i-Rashidi*, translated by N. Elias & Denison Ross, London 1895.



under Akbar in 1586, marks an spurt in historical writings on Kashmir. Akbar, who was himself keenly interested in history, had instructed the compilers of *Tarikh-i Alfi* to investigate and determine the circumstances which led to the rise and fall of dynasties. Perhaps this pragmatic consideration determined his approach towards the history of Kashmir also. His successors followed suit and Kashmir became not only an area of historical interest and enquiry for the Mughals, but inspired many poets and gave birth to considerable lively poetry of Faizi, Talib Amuli, Muhammad Jan Qudsi and others.

It is significant that the three earlier traditions quietly merged in the Mughal approach to the history of Kashmir. Akbar's interest in Kashmir's past led to interest in *Raja Tarangini*, his keenness to preserve the identity of Mughal history ensured continuation of the Central Asian point of view. Glimpses of West Asian tradition may also be seen in Mughal accounts, but imperialistic interests determined the trend and tenor of the historical accounts given by the Mughal historians.

As our concept of history does not now reel round the court and the camp alone, it is necessary to study the life and conditions of the common man, his ambitions and attitudes, his predilections and preferences, his moral and intellectual urges. For this extended approach of history we will have to explore sources other than political chronicles. A recourse to non-political literature like the mystic treatises, *malfuzat* and *maktubat* on one side, and the poetry, folklore and songs of the people on the other, is now the crying need of the hour. A comprehensive picture of Kashmir society and culture is possible only when literature of varied types is taken into consideration. It would involve an extensive search for literature of all types and categories to construct bit by bit and step by step a picture of Kashmir through the ages. Even the effort to prepare a bibliography of lost literature would not be without reward as it would help in determining the

conspectus of Kashmir scholars and the interests of the ruling elite. For instance, Nizam-ud-din Bakhshi's information that Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin had compiled a book on artillery<sup>1</sup> is significant in itself, though the book is no longer available. While referring to Zain-ul-Abidin's interest in agricultural development of the country, Nizam-ud-din says :<sup>2</sup>

در تعمیر ولایت کشمیر و تکثیر زراعت  
و کندن جوہا آن توفیق کہ او یافت  
هیچ کس را از حکام کشمیر دست نداده بود

The historians of Kashmir have to bring to light all aspects of the Sultan's activities with reference to irrigation and agriculture. The efforts of Japanese scholars like Yamamoto, Matsuo Ara and Tsukinowa,<sup>3</sup> have revealed the nature of waterworks in Delhi during the Sultanate period. Is it not possible that an identical survey of canals, reservoirs, aqueducts, etc. in Kashmir during the medieval period is undertaken and information contained in Persian chronicles is supplemented by archaeological and epigraphic evidence ? Such a survey would illumine many aspects of the economic history of Kashmir.

Further a detailed study of the external relations of Kashmir during the medieval period is yet to be made and for this political chronicles, travelogues, *tazkirahs* etc of other neighbouring countries will have to be carefully consulted. The fact that the Ilkhanid Sultan Ghazan Khan had learnt the Kashmiri language<sup>4</sup> is not without significance. A glimpse of this international relationship may be had in *Tabaqat-i Akbari*.<sup>5</sup> Researches in this sphere have to be pushed further. Among the gifts sent by the rulers of Kashmir to other

1. *Tabaqat-i Akbari*, III, p. 439.

2. *Tabaqat-i Akbari*, III, p. 435.

3. *Delhi : Architectural Remains of the Delhi Sultanate Period* Vol. III : Waterwork, by Tatsuro Yamamoto, Matsuo Ara and Tokifusa Tsukinowa, Tokyo, 1970.

4. *Tarikh-i Ghazan Khan*, p. 171.

5. *Tabaqat-i Akbari*, III, p. 440.

countries are included <sup>1</sup>شال و کاسه هائی بلورین To trace the history of different arts and crafts—carpets, jewellery, copper work, glass work, wood work, furs etc., little bits of information will have to be culled from different sources. For instance it is from a malfuz of Shaikh Hamid u'd-din Sufi of Nagaur, a Khalifa of Shaikh Mu'in-u'd-din Chishti, that we know that Shaikh Nizam-u'd-din Auliya had a Kashmiri shawl.<sup>2</sup>

### *The Raja Tarangini Tradition*

The Raja Tarangini, written in the middle of the 12th century (1148-9 A.D.), marks the beginning of the tradition of Kashmir history. Kalhana utilized inscriptions, popular traditions etc to prepare his account of Kashmir. Both from the point of view of the utilization of source material and a connected perspective of Kashmir history, Kalhana is doubtless unique. His most significant contribution was that he evolved a historical perspective out of the existing literature which hardly seemed "historicable", to use a term coined by Gottschalk. In fact it is necessary for a modern scholar to investigate how Kalhana handled the existing literature and moulded it on a pattern, unprecedented and original. The impact that Kalhana made on the historical thinking in Kashmir may be gauged from the fact that his work became an ideal and a pattern for others to follow. Nobody thought of traversing afresh the area covered by Kalhana. They simply abridged or re-stated whatever he had presented. A judicial adviser of Sultan Zainul Abidin (1420-70), and a learned Brahman Jonaraja<sup>3</sup> (ob. 1459) wrote a continuation of his *Raja Tarangini* and carried his narrative upto 1459. The work was undertaken at the instance of the Sultan who was keenly interested in history. Though the link period of his book, i.e. from Kalhana to the period just preceding his own

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1. *Tabaqat-i Akbari*, III, p. 440.
  2. *Sarur-us-Sudur* (MS).
  3. edited by Peterson, Bombay 1896.

there is little of value, he supplies interesting details about his own times, though fact and fiction sometimes get mixed up in his work. Jonaraja's pupil Pandit Srivara who was on the best of terms with Zainul Abidin and was brought up by him as his son and was the teacher of Hasan Shah (1472-84) pushed the tradition further and wrote *Jaina-Raja Tarangini*. The involvement of the Kashmir Sultans in maintaining Kalhana's tradition is significant and shows their intention to understand Kashmir history and culture in all its depth and dimension. The data supplied by Srivara about Zainul Abidin himself is very valuable. He credits his master with the introduction of the use of artillery in Kashmir.

The *Rajavalipatika* of Prajabhatta picks up the thread from Srivara.

Kalhana and Jonaraja had painted on a wider canvas and in a broader chronological framework but after them the trend was towards writing history of limited periods : Srivara gave an account of less than 30 years (1459-86), Prajabhatta dealt with 27 years (1486-1513). It appears that Prajabhatta had heard the rumblings of a distant storm, when he complained of "tumult in the kingdom". Ten years after Akbar's annexation of Kashmir (1586), Suka took up the work of Prajabhatta. Prajabhatta's work was unfortunately lost but Suka's work has survived.<sup>1</sup>

The Rajatarangini tradition did not end here. It inspired the Persian historians of the Mughal period who looked to Kalhana for pre-Muslim history of Kashmir. Mulla Shah Muhammad Shahabadi's *Tarikh-i Kashmir* is an instance in point.

Hardly has any historical work continued to inspire for so many centuries as *Raja Tarangini*. In Delhi Sultaante, Barani did not cover the field which had been traversed by Minhaj but in Kashmir, historians continued to incorporate

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1. J.C. Dutt has translated into English the works of Jonaraja, Srivara and Suka.

with certain omissions and deletions, the work of Kalhana. But in this assortment of data some considerations seem to be operating which should be identified. It is also to be seen if Kalhana's comprehensiveness of approach, collection of data from diverse sources, did influence his followers or not. The Raja-Tarangini tradition has to be studied as an active and articulate tradition in Kashmir history. The motivations which determined the approach of those successors of Kalhana through the centuries who abridged or synthesized his material, need careful scrutiny.

2. *The West Asian View :*

Strangely enough the knowledge of Arab geographers and compilers of encyclopaedias about Kashmir was not intimate and even their informants were not personally acquainted with the region. Abul Fida does not refer to Kashmir ; while Muqaddisi, Idrisi and Shahryar bin Buzurg<sup>1</sup> refer merely to its geographical location and give its distance from different important towns of India. Mas'udi gives a long account but his narrative contains both chaff and grain. Neither he nor Idrisi knew the name of the capital of Kashmir, which they refer to as "the town of Kashmir." It is, however, clear from Idrisi that the capital town of Kashmir was considered "one of the famous towns of India".<sup>2</sup>

Dimashqi divides Kashmir into Outer and Inner and says that the outer part comprises more than seventy thousand villages and the inner part more than a hundred thousand villages.<sup>3</sup> A study of the rural scene of Kashmir during the medieval period is a great desideratum. Archaeology, epigraphy, chronicles and folklore all will have to cooperate in such a study.

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1. *'Ajaib ul Hind*, p. 2.

2. India and the Neighbouring Territories in the *Kitab Nuzhat Al-Mushtaq Fi' Khitraq al-Afaq* of Al-Sharif Al-Idrisi, translated by S. Maqbul Ahmad, Leiden 1960, p. 64.

3. *Nukhbat al Dahr fi Aja'ib al Barr wa'l Bahar*, translated by M.A.F. Mehren, Copenhagen 1874.

The author of *Masalik-ul-Absar* was informed by a traveller that diamonds of good and rare quality were found in Kashmir<sup>1</sup>. While all these Arab accounts view Kashmir from Cairo, Damascus or other places, the author of *Chach Namah* looks at it from India but his knowledge also is not very deep and basically he represents the West Asian approach. He refers to the spread of Islam and the building of mosques and pulpits 'from the sea to the limits of Kashmir', as early as the 8th—9th century<sup>2</sup>. The way in which Idrisi and Kufi refer to Kashmir and Qannauj gives an impression of close cultural and commercial contacts existing between these two places<sup>3</sup>.

Some references to the position and resources of the ruler of Kashmir 'at whose royal threshold the other rulers of Hind have placed heads', need to be critically examined.

But this whole information available in Arabic works remains basically uncoordinated and desultory. It can at best give us an idea of the Kashmir geography during the medieval period. However some interesting formulations about cultural and economic conditions of Kashmir may be attempted if the entire Arabic source material is chronologically sifted and thematically arranged.

### 3. *The Central Asian Appraisal :*

The Central Asian appraisal of the history of Kashmir is by far the most valuable and revealing. There were geographic and historic reasons for this awareness. During the eleventh century there was an attitude of isolationism among the people of Kashmir which was the outcome of its geo-political situation. Referring to the powers that controlled the area

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1. *A Fourteenth Century Arab Account of India under Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq*, pp. 69-70.
  2. *The Chach Namah*, translated by Mirza Kalichbeg Fredun Beg, p. 6.
  3. Idrisi, p. 64.

Alberuni says :

“The south and east of the country belong to the Hindus, the west to various kings, the Bolar-Shah and the Shugnan-Shah, and the more remote parts upto the frontiers of Badakhshan, to the Wakhan-Shah. The north and part of the east of the country belong to the Turks of Khoten and Tibet.”<sup>1</sup>

Under these circumstances the instinct for self-preservation became active and led to segregational behaviour. Alberuni says that the people of Kashmir were particularly “anxious about the natural strength of their country, and therefore take always much care to keep a strong hold upon the entrances and roads leading into it.”<sup>2</sup> As a result of this attitude, Alberuni informs us, commerce suffered. If in northern India it was caste which in the opinion of Alberuni had effected contact with the outside world, in Kashmir it was the geo-political factor which had encouraged isolation and effected commercial relationship. According to Alberuni the people of Kashmir did not allow any Hindu whom they did not know to enter the country.<sup>3</sup>

The point whether Alberuni visited Kashmir or not needs investigation. At a number of places his observations give the impression of personal contact with the people of Kashmir.<sup>4</sup> He had even written some books for the people

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1. Alberuni, I, p. 206.

2. Alberuni, I, p. 206.

3. *ibid.*

4. At one place he remarks : “The people of Kashmir with whom I have conversed on the subject give a different statement.” (II, p. 181). He remarks at another place : “The distance from Lahur to the capital of Kashmir is 56 miles.....What other latitudes I have been able to observe myself.....” (I, p, 317) means his personal knowledge. While describing the mountain Kularjak, he says that the distance between this peak and the plateau of Kashmir is two farsakh. “The fortress Rajawari lies south of it, and the fortress Lahur west of it, the two strongest places I have ever seen.” (I, p. 208).

of Kashmir.<sup>1</sup> However Alberuni's account throws valuable light on some important aspects of the intellectual and religious history of Kashmir. He informs us that it was Vasukra, a native of Kashmir, who started explaining the Vedas and committing them to writing "because he was afraid that the Vedas might be forgotten and entirely vanish out of the memories of men".<sup>2</sup> Regarding alphabet (*Siddhamatrika*) he says that some people consider it as having originated from Kashmir. He refers to another distinction of the inhabitants of Kashmir. They "mark the single leaves of their books with figures which look like drawings or like the Chinese characters, the meaning of which can only be learned by a very long practice."<sup>3</sup> Obviously the reference is to the use of numerals by the people of Kashmir. Alberuni's account of Kashmir leaves one in no doubt about the pre-eminent position of this region in the world of Indian scholarship.

Alberuni's knowledge about the social life and customs of the people of Kashmir is not devoid of interest. He says that generally the people were pedestrians, the nobles however used palankins called *katt*. He describes plantations on the borders of swamps, refers to Turkish tribes which inhabited the area and were called *Bhattevaryan*. Regarding trade relations he informs us : "This (Rajawari) is the farthest place to which our merchants trade, and beyond which they never pass".<sup>4</sup> Alberuni and Kufi supply some indirect evidence for assessing the economic and commercial situation of Kashmir.

Alberuni describes rainfall in the region,<sup>5</sup> and observes: 'Kashmir has no *varshakala* (tropical rains in summer) but continual snowfall during two and a half months, beginning with Magha, and shortly after the middle of Caitra continual

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1. *Alberuni's India*, p. XXIV.

2. *Alberuni's India*, I, p. 126.

3. *ibid.*

4. *ibid.*, I, p. 208.

5. *ibid.*, I, p. 211.



rains set in for a few days, melting the snow and cleansing the earth.”<sup>1</sup>

While some other sources refer to contact between Qannauj and Kashmir, from Alberuni we know about contact between Gujarat and Kashmir. He says that every day they brought a jug of Ganges water and a basket of flowers from Kashmir for the Somnath temple.<sup>2</sup>

It appears from Alberuni that festivals in Kashmir had either historical or climatic basis. On the second of the month of Caitra a festival was celebrated by the people of Kashmir called Agdus to commemorate the victory gained by their King, Muttai, over the Turks.<sup>3</sup> About another festival he gives the following information:

“Jivasarman relates that the people of Kashmir celebrate a festival on the 26th and 27th of this month (i.e. Bhadrapada) on account of certain pieces of wood called *gana* which the water of the river Vitasta (Jailam) carries in those two days, through the capital Adhishthana.”<sup>4</sup>

Alberuni's is in fact the first detailed account of Kashmir that we get in Central Asian sources. He wrote at least 125 years before Kalhana. A comparative study of Alberuni and Kalhana may be of value in understanding the social milieu of Kashmir during the 11th and the 12th centuries.

With the rise of Mongols and as a result of the problems that came in its wake, Kashmir entered another phase of its history. In the 13th and 14th centuries Kashmir like other Central Asian lands became the center of a great religious crisis. The Ilkhans, who were Buddhists earlier, got converted to Islam and the entire region came in the grip of an

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1. *Alberuni's India*, I, pp. 211-212.

2. *Alberuni's India*, II, p. 104.

3. *ibid.*, II, p. 178.

4. *ibid.*, II, p. 181.

unprecedented religious ferment. That Muhammad bin Tughluq was also contemplating to send missionaries to Kashmir<sup>1</sup> shows the nature of activity going on there.

Rashid-u'd-din Fazlullah (ob. 1318), the famous Il-khanid Wazir, wrote about Kashmir inspired as much by his global concept of history as the intriguing phenomenon of Buddhist conversions in Central Asia and Kashmir. He writes:

“Now that the world from one end to the other is under one or the other branch of the Chingiz Khanids, philosophers, astronomers, scholars and historians of all sects and religions connected with Khita, ancient India-Kashmir, Tibet, Uighur, as well as other people like the Turks, Arabs and Franks are before our eyes in large numbers and every one of them has books containing the history, chronology and religious thought of those countries and they are also conversant with these subjects.”

He devoted Chapter VI of his *Tarikh-i Hind wa Sind* to an account of the rulers of Kashmir. It is significant to note that while Rashid-u'd-din's four general chapters about India are mainly based on Alberuni whom he calls 'pride of scholars', his chapter on Kashmir is based on his personal investigations. Kashmir's significance at that time was in the wider context of medieval religious thought, particularly Buddhism. The Buddhism of Iran, Karl Jahn has suggested, stood to a great extent in the shadow of Kashmir and India than of eastern Buddhism.<sup>2</sup> This basic fact of Central Asian history explains the interest of Rashid-u'd-din in the history of Kashmir.

Rashid-u'd-din's Indian informant was Kamalashr iBakhshi whom we know only from Rashid-u'd-din's account as an expert on the history of India and Buddhism.

Arghun (1284-1291) and his son Ghazan (1295-1304) were, until their conversion to Islam, ardent promoters of Buddhism.

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1. *Siyar-ul-Auliya*, p. 288.

2. Rashid-u'd-din's *History of India*, p. XXXIII.

Ghazan's conversion to Islam in 1295 led to destruction of Buddhist centres in Central Asia.

Karl Jahn says that for political reasons Kashmir and parts of India "were incorporated more closely in the Ilkhanic than in the Great Khanic sphere of influence".<sup>1</sup> Muhammad bin Tughluq's desire to propagate Islam in Kashmir was perhaps due to his contact with Ilkhind Sultan Abu Sa'id with whom he had correspondence and whose letters are preserved in *Bayaz-i-Tajuddin Wazir*.<sup>2</sup> Nizam-u'd-din Bakhshi refers to Abu Sa'id's relations with the rulers of Kashmir though the name of the ruler has been wrongly mentioned by him.<sup>3</sup>

The historical portion of Rashid-u'd-din's book relating to Kashmir is a short and superficial summary of the country's past, but reveals undoubted acquaintance of Kamalashri with the mythological and historical conditions of his fatherland. Kamalashri follows on the tracks of Kalhana and opens no fresh perspectives. It appears that Rashid-u'd-din's found in his time two historiographical traditions in operation with reference to Kashmir—one represented by Alberuni and the other by Kalhana. He wove them into a pattern by throwing Kamalshari's account in between.

Mirza Haider Dughlat wrote his history to preserve the memory of the Mughals who in his opinion were speedily declining and their power was becoming 'a dream of the past'.<sup>4</sup> He did not know what a brilliant future lay for the Mughals in India. He was serious about his job of writing the history of the times. The first part was written in Kashmir in 1544-46. (The second part which was written in 1541-42 contains

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1. *History of India*, p. XXXIV.

2. *Bayaz-i Tajuddin Wazir*, ed. by Iraj Afshar and Murtuza Timuri, Tehran, 1353.

3. *Tabaqat-i Akbari*, III, p. 440.

4. *Tarikh-i Rashidi*, tr. p. 1.

autobiographical details). His chapters dealing with a geographical description of Kashmir, its wonders, conversion of Kashmir to Islam, the Sultans of Kashmir and the religious sects of Kashmir are interesting and informative so far as they go.<sup>1</sup> Regarding cultivation in Kashmir he says :

“The cultivation is: (1) by irrigation (*abi*), (2) on land not needing artificial irrigation, (3) gardens, and (4) level ground, where the river banks abound in violets and many coloured flowers.”<sup>2</sup>

He refers to lofty buildings constructed of fresh cut pine. “Most of these are five storeys high”. The passages in the markets and streets of the city were paved with hewn stone. He mentions some crafts like stone-polishing, bottle making, gold-beating etc.<sup>3</sup> His account of Nurbakhshis is rather critical.

Mirza Haider did not approve of the information supplied by Sharafuddin Yezdi in his *Zafar Namah*<sup>4</sup>. “He is not consistent”, remarks the Mirza and continues: “He had never been there himself, but derived his information from travellers who had not a proper regard for accuracy<sup>5</sup>.” However Yezdi’s following information is revealing<sup>6</sup> :

درمیان کو هسار . . . ده هزار قریه  
معمور هست — در تمام آن ولایت  
صد هزار دیه محل عمارت و زراعت است

#### 4. The Mughal Approach :

With the establishment of Mughal authority, a new phase begins in the historical writings of Kashmir. Akbar had a fascination for history and had put a number of scholars at the court to historical writings. At his instance Mulla Shah

1. *Tarikh-i Rashidi*, pp. 423-437.

2. *ibid.*, p. 425.

3. *Tarikh-i Rashidi*, p. 434.

4. *Zafar Namah*, Bib. Indica, Calcutta 1888, pp. 177-180.

5. *Tarikh-i Rashidi*, p. 430.

6. *Zafar Namah*, p. 178.

Muhammad Shahabadi had translated *Raja Tarangini* into Persian. But perhaps this translation was not considered upto the mark and Abdul Qadir Badaoni had to do it again in 1590-91. Another Persian translation by Maulana Imdad-ud-din is referred to by Sujan Rai in his *Khulasat-ut-Tawarikh*.

It appears that Akbar had taken possession of and preserved some literature which was produced in Kashmir under the Sultans. Satum had written a comprehensive account of Zain-ul Abidin but it is not available.<sup>1</sup> Books written on music and other arts also have not survived.

The value of Mughal histories for the history of Kashmir should not be under-estimated. They give information which is not available elsewhere. The relations of Bahlul Lodi, Sultan Mahmud Gujrati and others with the rulers of Kashmir have been referred to by Nizam-u'd-din.<sup>2</sup> Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin's knowledge of the Jogi sciences has also been pointed out by him.<sup>3</sup>

The Persian sources like *Tarikh-i Kashmir* of Mulla Shah Muhammad Shahabadi (written in 1591), was inspired by Akbar; the *Baharistan-i Shahi* (from earliest times to 1625) is the work of a Nurbakhshi saint associated with Syed Abul Ma'ali who was responsible for civil commotion in Kashmir during the reign of Yusuf Shah Chak. The *Baharistan* supplements the Sanskrit works of Prajabhatta and Suka for the periods 1486-1505 and 1537-57. The *Tarikh-i Kashmir* of Haider Malik Chadura who was in the service of Sultan Yusuf Shah Chak, and had gone in exile with him to Bihar in 1586, by a strange coincidence won the confidence of Jahangir and joined Mughal service. These three works though written by the Kashmiris have an imprint of Mughal influence.

The Mughal histories compiled by Abul Fazl, Nizam-u'd din and Badaoni supply some very interesting details about the

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1. *Tabaqat-i Akbari*, III, p. 439.

2. *Tabaqat-i Akbari*, III, p 440.

3. *ibid.*, p. 441.

history of Kashmir. Nizam-u'd-din tells us that one Habib was the first to manufacture muskets in Kashmir. According to him he was peerless in his art.<sup>1</sup>

” حبيب آتش باز که تفنگ در کشمير  
او پيدا کرد . . . در فن آتش بازی  
نظير خود نداشت “

Badaoni brings to light some saints and literary figures of Kashmir who made a contribution to the intellectual and cultural history of the area. The Mughal historians did not hesitate to recognize the achievements of the Sultans of Kashmir. Nizam-u'd-din supplies information which throws light on economic conditions in Kashmir.<sup>2</sup> Likewise important bits of information are scattered in other Mughal chronicles. All this information has to be pieced together in order to form some idea about the life and conditions of the people under the Sultans. Regarding fixation of prices under Zain-ul Abidin, he says<sup>3</sup>:

نرخ نویسی در زمان او پیداشد

Some of this information is undoubtedly derived from Jonaraja but it is worthwhile to see what type of information was culled from Kashmiri sources by the Mughal historians and what other data was ignored or suppressed.

It may be pointed out here in passing that the historians of the Delhi Sultanate supply very little information about Kashmir, but whatever bits of information we find in these works need not be ignored. Minhaj mentions Kashmir only once, in passing, in connection with Sultan Bahauddin Sam, of the Shansabanid dynasty of Tukharistan, that the boundaries of his kingdom extended in the east 'as far as the frontier of

1. *Tabaqat-i Akbari*, III, p. 439.

2. *Tabaqat-i Akbari*, III, p. 435.

3. *Tabaqat-i Akbari*, III, p. 436.

Kashmir.<sup>1</sup> In the *Lubabul Albab* of 'Aufi, written during the time of Iltutmish, Kashmir occurs in the verses of two Persian poets--Hakim Sharaf uz Zaman Qatran al-Azdi al Tabrizi and Zia-u'd-din Abd al-Rafa'y al-Harawi. The former says in a *qasidah*:<sup>2</sup>

اے بخوبی برتبان کابل و کشمیر میر  
 ماندم از بس کآوری در وعدہا تاخیر خیر

Ziauddin Abd al-Rafa'y al-Harawi says :<sup>3</sup>

گلبن حکایت از بت کشمیر میکند  
 سوسن نشان زلجبت فرخار میدهد

Amir Khusrau refers to the Kashmiri language as one of the main languages of the country.<sup>4</sup> An important literary work of the Sultanate period which shows that under Muhammad bin Tughluq there was keen interest in knowing about the social and cultural life of Kashmir is the *Basatin ul Uns* of Ikhtasan. His story is derived from Kashmir and the references to the life of the people there are interesting. This work is important as much to understand the political and cultural perspective of Muhammad bin Tughluq as the life of medieval Kashmir.<sup>5</sup>

No historiographical survey of Kashmir can ignore the non-political literature in evaluating its history and culture. The aspirations of the people and the spirit of the age can best be studied in the non-political literature. But this literature would call for the application of tools of enquiry and analysis different from those used for political chronicles.

The most outstanding name in this connection is that of the saint of the Kubrawiya order, Syed Ali Hamadani (ob.

1. *Tabaqat-i Nasiri*, Raverty Tr. p. 431.

2. *Lubab-ul- Albab*, ed. Browne, II p. 216.

3. *ibid.*, II, p. 333.

4. *Nuh Sio thr*, p. 179.

5. My colleague Mr. Iqtidar Husain Siddiqi is working on *Basatin-ul Uns*.

1385). With him begins an era of great spiritual activity in Kashmir. The fact that he entered Kashmir with several hundred disciples who settled in different parts of the region is too important to be ignored. Only through efforts to collect mystic works, *malfuzat*, poetic compositions and letters of these saints can one construct an image of the social and spiritual atmosphere of Kashmir at a very crucial period. Paying tribute to Syed Ali Hamadani's impact on Kashmir, Iqbal says :

خطہ را آن شاہ دریا آستیں  
داد علم وصنعت و تہذیب و دین

How his impact was felt on education, arts and crafts, culture and religion can be estimated with some exactness only when his works are carefully analysed and interpreted. For instance his *Zakhirat-ul Muluk* would yield considerable material of historical significance if any critical study of the work correlates his theoretical exposition with the actual socio-political milieu. No thought exists in a vacuum and the saint's observations therefore have a relevance for the society in which it was written. His *Risala Aurad-i Fathiya* and *Risalah Fathiya* contain many valuable pieces of information for the students of cultural and religious history. Without tapping all this literature no critical assessment of the social and religious trends in Kashmir can be undertaken. When he entered Kashmir he had already assimilated the mystic tradition of the time. Frequent references in his *maktubat* to the verses of Khwaja Fari-du'd-din 'Attar and others reveal his awareness of the thought of the early mystics. He even prepared a summary of the *Mantiq ut Tayyar* of 'Attar (اختیارات منطق الطیر).

His exhortations about education are significant and reveal the nature of his activity. His commentary on the *Fusus-ul Hikam* of Ibn-i Arabi is one of the earliest commentaries of that important mystical treatise. No history of the development of Muslim religious thought in Kashmir can be written



without reference to this commentary and a careful analysis of the thought of Sayyid Ali Hamadani in this context. How he rejects, accepts and amends some of the Buddhist trends of thought which were in the air will also have to be investigated in the broader framework of Kashmir history during the medieval period.

The letters of Sayyid Ali Hamadani are also of great historical value. Among the persons whom he addressed these letters are the rulers of Badakhshan and Kashmir. In the political sphere his relations with Timur and the factors that led to estrangement with him need careful analysis.

The Nurbakhshi and Rishi traditions in the history of Islamic mystical thought in Kashmir also deserve careful study. In this connection literature on Nurbakhshis, the songs and sayings of the Rishis, their contact with non-Muslim population, their humanistic approach and efforts to build up a society free from tensions will have to be studied in depth.

Professional historians at one time looked askance at oral research but in recent times its value has come to be better realized. After blending the documentary and oral source materials, a more lively picture of Kashmir during the medieval period can be prepared. The songs and sayings of mystic teachers, itinerants, etc. can be profitably utilised for this purpose. William Baum's *Transcribing and Editing Oral History* and Ramon Harris' *The Practice of Oral History* have shown what material of sociological significance can be gathered from such sources.

The history of Kashmir will have to be supplemented by the poetic literature.<sup>1</sup> If Kroeber's observation in his *Configurations of Culture Growth* that poetry reveals better than prose the spirit of an age is correct, the value of a critical

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1. Mirza's *Tazkirah Shu'ara-i Kashmir* (edited by Syed Husamuddin Rashidi, Iqbal Academy, Karachi,) is informative so far as it goes, but it does not go far enough. There is greater scope of work on earlier poets from the cultural and historical points of view.

study of poetical literature produced in Kashmir cannot be gainsaid. But the tools of historical criticism and evaluation which will be applied to this literature would be different from those applied to political chronicles or mystical records. A continuous process of analysis and synthesis of the source material drawn from different and diverse sources alone can help in the preparation of a comprehensive history of Kashmir.

# II

## State and Polity



## ***The Delhi Sultanate and the Mughal Empire: Genesis and Salient Features\****

The history of medieval India centres round two main political entities : the Delhi Sultanate (1206-1526) and the Mughal Empire (1526-1857). The Sultanate of Delhi was founded in 1206 by the slave-officers of Shihab-u'd-din of Ghur and five dynasties—the Ilbarites, the Khaljis, the Tughluqs, the Syeds and the Lodis, each one of them with an average life-span of 70 years—guided its destinies. When it began to disintegrate, a number of provincial kingdoms rose at Jaunpur, Bengal, Gujarat, Malwa and the Deccan. These kingdoms represented the efflorescence of regional cultures and regional political aspirations. Their decay provided the constructional material for an all-India political edifice built up by the Mughals. Not only were their achievements in the sphere of administration and culture assimilated by the Mughal rulers but a new perspective and a more abiding link

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with the soil were also provided by them. Barring the Sur interregnum (1538-1554), the Mughal Empire founded by Babur in 1526 continued with fluctuating fortunes upto 1857. No dynasty of medieval India ruled over the country for a longer period than the Mughals. The Mughals gave shape to an all-India administrative system and laid the foundation of Mughal culture which moulded the social life, customs, manners and etiquette of the urban elite. The Mughal Empire transcended barriers of religion, region and race and came to represent the political aspirations of all Indian people. As its central organization weakened, fissiparous tendencies came to the surface and the Mughal Empire began to crack under its own weight. Foreign invasions accelerated the pace of its decay. The disintegration of the Mughal Empire saw the rise of regional forces—basically different in approach and character from those which had appeared on the decline of the Delhi Sultanate some centuries earlier—represented by the Marathas, the Sikhs, the Jats and the Rohillas. None of them however had the resources or the capacity to establish an all-India political system. They destabilized the Mughal political authority but could not pave the way for the emergence of a broad-based power able to control an all India edifice. The liquidation of these powers came at the hands of the British who, while allowing some local Chiefs to function under their paramountcy, cut up root and branch every possible rival to their authority.

It is round the Delhi Sultanate and the Mughal Empire that traditions of monarchy, theories of kingship, character of administrative institutions and ideals of government developed and determined the political culture of medieval India. In the broader framework of Asiatic history, the rise of the Delhi Sultanate synchronized with the rise of the Mongols and the Ilkhans ; and the rise of the Mughals with the rise of the Safavids and the Ottomans. A comparative study of these political entites may lead to interesting formulations about state, religion and politics during the medieval period.

### *The Geographical Factor*

Both geography and geopolitics played an important role in the rise of these empires. Their establishment, expansion, consolidation, evolution of administrative institutions and subsequent decay and disintegration were determined by geographical factors. Diversities of land, courses of rivers and climatic conditions influenced the distribution of population and moulded the character of the people.<sup>1</sup> "Geography," remarks Patricia Kendall, "reigns supreme in India. It indicates political boundaries, determines social movements and limits ethnical expansion."<sup>2</sup> The rise and fall of these empires, the nature of their administrative units, assertion of local and regional forces, the exposed or protected condition of Indian frontiers and difficulties of communication with the South was linked up with the physical configuration of the country. Monarchy was a geographical necessity and the activities of the government were determined by geography.<sup>3</sup> Due to immense concentration of population and resources the Ganges-Jumna Doab became the cradle of all Indian empires, including the Delhi Sultanate and the Mughal Empire. Whenever a great power appeared in the North, it sought extension of its authority to the South. But its extension to the South was almost always followed by disintegration due to difficulties of communication and administrative control. When the Sultanate of Delhi extended to the South, Muhammad bin Tughluq had to create a second administrative city at Daulatabad,<sup>4</sup> and when the Mughal authority reached its highest watermark, Aurangzeb had to stay in the Deccan for nearly 26 years to deal with its problems. A continuous

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1. See, K.M. Pannikar, *Geographical Factors in Indian History*, Bombay, 1955; P. Saran, *The Provincial Government of the Mughals*, Chapter I, Bombay, 1973.
  2. *India and the British*, p. 18.
  3. See Ibn Hasan, *Central Structure of the Mughal Empire*, New Delhi, Reprint 1970, pp. 37-38.
  4. See, *Ṣubḥul A'sha: "An Arab Account of India during the Fourteenth Century"*, translation by O. Spies, p. 30.

struggle between centripetal and centrifugal tendencies is, therefore, discernible in the history of medieval India and geographical forces seem to act and react continuously on the fate of the centralized political systems of the country. It is, however, interesting to note that though India is surrounded on three sides by the sea, it was only during the Mughal period that the need of a maritime policy in the context of foreign relations was really felt. This was due to geopolitical factors. Earlier though commercial activity went on in the coastal areas, about which the Geniza<sup>1</sup> records throw valuable light, a real political threat was posed by the Portuguese, the Dutch, the British and the French trading companies. Thereafter the centre of political gravity shifted from Delhi, Lahore, Agra and Allahabad to Calcutta, Madras, Bombay and Goa.

### *Nature of the two Empires*

The establishment of the Sultanate of Delhi introduced a new element in Indian polity and changed in vital details the political culture of medieval India. Earlier the country was ruled on a feudal basis ;<sup>2</sup> each kingdom being divided into fiefs held by the members of the ruling house, the *kulas*. Monopolization of all high offices in the State by this land-owning aristocracy, maintenance of private armies and sub-infeudation<sup>3</sup> weakened the authority of the king, narrowed down the political horizon and encouraged centrifugal tendencies. The establishment of the Sultanate paved the way for the liquidation of the multi-state system, and all concepts of localism in administration and legal immunity of the overlord associated with the feudal structure of the Rajput period were rejected and thrown overboard.<sup>4</sup> A strong centralized monarchy succeeded in giving to the country the skeleton of an all-India administration by bringing the chief cities and the great routes

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1. See *Islamic Culture*, July 1963. D.S. Goitein, *Letters and Documents on the Indian trade in medieval times*.
  2. See, A.S. Altekar, *The State and Government in Ancient India*, Benares, 1949.
  3. See, A.S. Altekar, *Rashtrakutas and their Times*, Poona, 1934, p. 265.
  4. See, K.A. Nizami, *Religion and Politics in India during the thirteenth century*, third edition, Delhi, 1978, pp. 65-66.



under the control of the government of Delhi. The place of feudal armies was taken by a strong standing army, centrally recruited, centrally administered and centrally paid. Uniformity of the legal system, the tariff regulations and the currency widened the merchant's world and restoration of contact with the outside world gave a new impetus to trade. The founders of the Delhi Sultanate ushered in the dawn of a new era of urban revolution,<sup>1</sup> characterized by the rise of new cities with cosmopolitan outlook, replacing the caste cities described by Alberuni in his *Kitab al-Hind*.<sup>2</sup> Since all sorts and sections of the Indian population had taken part in the building up of the new cities, and the working class had, in particular, placed its surplus at the disposal of the State, the Sultans succeeded in a short time in consolidating their position in urban areas. Through grant of *iqta's* to Turkish officers they paved the way for integration of areas part by part.

But the early Turkish Sultans constituted an extraneous element in the socio-political set-up of medieval India. Forty Turkish families (*Turkan-i-Chehlghani*) controlled and monopolized all important offices in the government and, guided by racial considerations, kept out even Indian born Muslims from the administration. This was necessary to a certain extent for consolidation of their power in the initial stages. However, ethnic exclusiveness could provide only ephemeral compactness. Identification with the Indian situation and broad base for the state was the *sine qua non* for a stable monarchy. The Khaljis

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1. See *Introduction to Elliot and Dowson's History of India*, Vol. II (Aligarh, ed.) ; *The Delhi Sultanat*, p. 186 et seqq., *Religion and Politics in India during the thirteenth century*, pp. 86-87.
  2. English translation by E.C. Sachau, *Alberuni's India*, London, 1914.
  3. For significance of *iqta'* in medieval Indian administrative set-up, see Nizami, *Religion and Politics in India during the thirteenth century*, p. 128 et. seqq. Miss A.K.S. Lambton's discussion of the *iqta'* system under the Seljuqs in *Landlord and Peasant in Persia* (pp. 53-73) is illuminating. Some of the characteristic features of this system as described by her are discernible in Delhi Sultanate also. See also Becker's article in *Der Islam*, V, 1914.

(1290-1320) responded to this urge of Indian polity in a limited but significant way and turned the Turkish state into an *Indo-Muslim State*. The political horizon of Muhammad bin Tughluq (1325-1351) was broader still.<sup>1</sup> He visualized a political arrangement in which all Indian people were equally involved and the State, while maintaining its basically Muslim outlook, provided all social and religious liberties to non-Muslims and admitted them in large numbers in the administration of the country. The experiment of Muhammad bin Tughluq was seriously taken up by the provincial governments, which identified themselves with the local population and its problems.

The Mughal rulers—particularly Akbar—assimilated fully the traditions of Muhammad bin Tughluq<sup>2</sup> and the legacy of the provincial kingdoms<sup>3</sup> and strove to broaden the base of the State so as to make it coterminous with the Indian people. Then alone the principle of dynastic rule could take roots in the confidence of the people. The Mughals created a governing class comprising almost all important elements in Indian political life, particularly focusing their attention on the Rajputs. The Sultans had followed a policy of protection and toleration towards the non-Muslims, the Mughals gave them a sense of *participation* in the destinies of the Empire. By (a) organizing the country in provinces under direct control of the centre (instead of *iqta's* assigned by the Sultans), (b) removing the difference in status between Muslim and non-Muslim subjects, (c) establishing direct contact between the King and the people (through daily darbars, *jharokas*, royal tours to different parts of the country, matrimonial alliances with the Rajputs), and (d) identifying themselves with the Indian milieu and by respecting and reviving the ancient traditions of the people—the Mughals converted the *Indo-*

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1. See *infra*, Chapter VI, p. 101 *et seq.*

2. See *infra*, Chapter VI.

3. See, for instance, Professor H.K. Sherwani's article "Deccani Preludes to Akbar's Social and Economic Reforms," *Islamic Culture*, January 1976, pp. 25-31.

*Muslim State* into an *Indian State*. There is however a continuity in the development of polity during the time of these two empires. The polity of the Mughal period evolved and developed out of the traditions set by the Sultans. It was during the Sultanate period that Zia-u'd-din Barani had remarked, despite all his prejudices, that a Sultan who did not gain the support of all his subjects was a usurper.<sup>1</sup> If the Sultanate was the root, the Mughal Empire became the fruit of the Muslim initiative and statesmanship in India. Identity of economic and political interests, combined with a common cultural outlook evolved by the Mughals, ensured long life to the Mughal rule. Though any clear consciousness of national unity was still far off, the policy of 'peace with all' [صلح کل] and 'equal opportunities for all' provided the necessary climate for the evolution of a common outlook on life. What Babur (1526-1530) called a 'Hindustani way of life' had become a social reality under the aegis of the Mughal rule and the Mughal Empire which had been the focal point of Indian political life for more than three centuries, came to represent both the political and social cultures of medieval India. Whatever else the Delhi Sultanate was able to achieve, and its achievements in other spheres were not ordinary, it had not succeeded in evolving a synthesis of social and political attitudes like the Mughal Empire.

The capitals of the two Empires—Delhi and Agra—had a distinct character of their own. Delhi under the Sultans was not only the capital of the Sultanate, it was the hub of the eastern world of Islam.<sup>2</sup> Here had gathered a large number of princes, politicians, scholars, literati, poets and saints from Central Asia and Persia driven by the Mongols. Delhi was the only Muslim State which could keep its head erect when almost every Muslim State had succumbed to Mongol pressure.

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1. *Fātāwa-i Jahāndāri*, ed. Mrs. A. Salim Khan, Lahore, p. 82 et seqq.
  2. Amir Khusrau, *Nuh Sipihr*, Calcutta ed. p. 143 et seqq. *Futūh us-Salātīn*, Madras ed. pp. 114-115; Barani, *Tārikh-i Firuz Shāhi*, I 341; Amir Khusrau, *Daval Rani Khizr Khan*, Aligarh ed. pp. 46-47.

With scholars came Muslim sciences and Delhi became the repository of Muslim learning in the East. The Mughal decision to make Agra their capital in preference to Delhi was determined by geopolitical considerations.<sup>1</sup> Necessity to have direct and immediate control over Rajputana dictated this step. But Agra could never attain the eminence of Delhi which again came into prominence as Shahjahanabad and remained the capital till the Mughal Empire ceased to exist. In fact Delhi was the symbol of power for both these Empires.

Different opinions have been expressed about the nature of the Delhi Sultanate and the Mughal Empire. Dr. I.H. Qureshi considers the Delhi Sultanate a 'Culture State'<sup>2</sup> and Dr. Beni Prasad<sup>3</sup> designates the Mughal Government as such. Sir Jadunath Sarkar, however, thought otherwise and said that "the aim of the government was extremely limited, materialistic, almost sordid".<sup>4</sup> In commenting on the spirit of medieval governments, one should never overlook the fact that any attempt to inject modern democratic concepts in the evaluation of medieval political institutions is bound to blur our historical perspective. Medieval institutions should be judged in the background of their own milieu and in the context of the spirit of that age. While it is undeniable that in both the Delhi Sultanate and the Mughal Empire the state resources were fully at the disposal of the ruler and the governing classes, it was not possible for them to ignore the welfare of the people. Apart from a large numbers of stipends, pensions, *madad-i ma'āsh* grants, *siyurghals*, etc. which were intended to help the needy and the poor,—without any religious or other discrimination<sup>5</sup>—the state managed such activities as supply of water,

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1. See, *Shah Waliullah Dehlawi Kay Siyāsi Maktūbāt*, ed. by K.A. Nizami, second ed. p. 8.

2. See, *Administration of the Sultanate of Delhi*, first ed. p. 168.

3. *History of Jahangir*, p. 94. See also I.H. Qureshi, *The Administration of the Mughal Empire*, Karachi, pp. 216, 255.

4. *Mughal Administration*, p. 5.

5. Though from the time of Sher Shah Suri and the Mughals the grant of *madad-i ma'āsh* land and stipends to non-Muslims becomes a

(Contd. on next page)



appealed to the common man to rise against the State and set right the existing situation.<sup>1</sup>

### *Monarchy and theories of Kingship*

A number of political treatises like *Ādāb-ul Harb*, *Zakhīrat-ul-Mulūk*, *Fatāwa-i-Jahāndari*, *A'in-i-Akbari* deal with the expectations of the people from their rulers. But why monarchy? The answer is provided in a saying quoted in political works<sup>2</sup> and sometimes inscribed on coins<sup>3</sup> also :

لولا السلطان لا كل الناس بعضهم بعضا

(If there was no Sultan people would devour each other).

Thus the *raison d'être* for kingship was maintenance of peace and dispensation of justice. Amir Khusrau compares a ruler to a shepherd<sup>4</sup> and says : "If a shepherd is drunk or negligent, his herd would find a place in the stomach of wolves".<sup>5</sup> A king was duty bound to ensure peaceful and satisfactory conditions for both the rich and the poor.<sup>6</sup> The extent to which the duty of a ruler with regard to dispensation of justice was emphasized may be gauged from the following

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1. See *Tafhīmāt-i Ilāhiya* for his criticism of the ways of the rulers and the ruling classes and his exhortations to the common man to rise to the occasion.
  2. Fakhr-i Mudabbir, *Ādāb-ul Harb*. f. 113a.
  3. Nelson Wright, *The Coinage and Metrology of the Sultans of Delhi*, p. 143.
  4. In Malay political traditions the high officials are referred to as shepherd. Cf. Khoo Kay Kim's *The Peninsular Malay States* (Cyclo-styled), p. 15.
  5. *Nuh Sipihr*, pp. 241-42.
  6. *Nuh Sipihr*, p. 242,

آن عمل آرند که در دیه و شهر  
منعم و مفلس شود آسوده بهر

remarks of the historian Zia-u'd-din Barani:<sup>1</sup>

الملك يبقى مع الكفر ولا يبقى مع الظلم

(Kingship can co-exist with infidelity but not with injustice)

(i) The Sultans of Delhi and the Mughal rulers both believed in the 'divine source' of political power. Balban (1266-1287) looked upon kingship as "viceregency of God on earth" and considered his heart to be منظر ربانى.<sup>2</sup> To Abul Fazl royalty was "a light emanating from God and a ray from the sun" which he calls فرايزدى. This was communicated by God to kings without the intermediate assistance of any body.<sup>3</sup> Jahangir (1605-1627) regarded sovereignty as a gift from God.<sup>4</sup> The rulers of the two main empires of medieval India called themselves "shadow of God on earth."<sup>5</sup> It was natural therefore that rebellion was considered عصيان (sin) and a rebel was condemned as عاصى (sinner).<sup>6</sup> Apocryphal traditions of the Prophet were sometimes cited to augment the power and prestige of the Sultan and in order to make obedience to political authority a religious obligation, but without considering for a moment the semantic of the word *sultan* during the time of the Prophet.<sup>7</sup>

1. *Fatāwa-i Jahāndāri*, Lahore ed., p. 327. Nizamul Mulk Tusi quotes the same saying in his *Siyāsat Nāmah*, ed. Tihiran, p. 6.
2. *Tārikh-i Firuz Shāhi*, p. 34 et seq.
3. *Ā'in*, p. 2; Blochmann, I, p. III.
4. *Tuzuk-i Jahāngīri*, Aligarh ed., p. 24.
5. *Tārikh-i Fakhruddin Mubārak Shāh*, p. 13; *Ṭabaqāt-i Nāṣiri*, pp. 124, 205; *Qir'ān-us Sā'dain*, p. 205; *Akbar Namah*, III, p. 669, etc.
6. *Ṭabaqāt-i Nāṣiri*, p. 116; *Ādāb-ul Ḥarb*, f. 100b; *Nuh Siṭihr*, p. 198.
7. The word *sulṭān* was not used in the sense of any specific political authority during the time of the Prophet.

(ii) The principle of 'legitimacy'—the right of a particular dynasty to rule—worked in India during the time of the early Turkish Sultans (1206-1290) and the Mughals (1526-1857). The Ilbarites (1210-1290) believed that none except a descendant of Iltutmish had the right to rule and their political behaviour confirmed their conviction. The Khaljis (1290-1320) smashed the concept of legitimacy and thereafter 'right to rule' was relegated to the background in the face of 'might to rule.' The provincial kingdoms which rose up at the disintegration of the Sultanate of Delhi further confirmed the validity of this principle. When Babur appeared on the Indian political scene (1526), he was disturbed to find that loyalty to a dynasty was not there as a political principle. When the people of Bengal told him that they obeyed any one who occupied the throne,<sup>1</sup> he realized that political power could not be consolidated without buttressing the dynastic position. His successors concentrated on it and succeeded in inculcating in people such attachment with the Mughal dynasty that in 1857 even those Indian powers which were hostile to the Mughals gathered round the banner of the Mughal Emperor,<sup>2</sup> Bahadur Shah, who was nothing more than the phantom of a forgotten glory but had come to represent 'the principle of legitimacy' in Indian political life.

(iii) Though princes of the ruling families were expected to be a source of strength to the monarch, often the position was just the opposite. Some rulers, therefore, mercilessly massacred their brothers out of suspicion and fear. Mubarak Khalji (1316-1320), Shahjahan (1628-1659) and Aurangzeb (1659-1707) executed or blinded their brothers. Another serious development of the Mughal period was that very often sons rebelled against the authority of their father. Jahangir, Shahjahan and Aurangzeb were all guilty of this recalcitrant behaviour. A vicious circle thus came into operation: whoever rebelled against his father was rebelled against by his son. This had its political ramifications and the nobility often got divided on succession issues and the differences and dissensions which

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1. *Memoirs*, tr. Beveridge, pp. 482-83.

2. See *1857 kā Tārīkhī Roznāmcha*, ed. Nizami, Delhi 1958, p. 31.



flowed from the palace poisoned the springs of national life. As a result of lurking suspicion against their cousins and collaterals, well-organised intelligence kept a strict watch on their activities during the later Mughal period. These princes were called *salatin*<sup>1</sup> and contemporary records show that their living conditions were far from satisfactory. It may be of interest to note that the position of these *salatin* princes was in certain respects identical with the situation in the Malay states in the 19th century.<sup>2</sup> To keep these princes gainfully employed was a problem, particularly when their number was continuously increasing. They became a parasitical class, always treated with suspicion and mistrust by the reigning monarch.

(iv) Political theorists mostly connected with the court, speak nothing about rebellion ; if they every refer to it they condemn the rebel as a sinner. How religion was called in to eliminate all idea of rebellion against the Sultan from the public mind may be gauged from the following two instances : (a) In a *farman* of Firuz Shah Tughluq, a saying is attributed to the Caliph 'Umar : "Doing a thing forbidden by the Sultan is worse in consequences than doing a thing forbidden by the Qur'ān".<sup>3</sup> (b) Syed Jalāluddin Bukhāri, a great saint of the Suhrawardi order, exhorted his audience during the reign of Firuz Shah Tughluq: "The Prophet has said : 'Whoever obeys

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1. P. Spear gives a graphic account of the *salātin* in his *Twilight of the Mughals*, Cambridge, 1951.
  2. Cf. Khoo Kak Kim's article : *The Peninsular Malay States* (Cyclo-styled), p. 23.
  3. *Munshat-i Mahru*, p. 2.

در قول امیرالمومنین عمر رضی الله تعالی عنه آمده است مایزع  
السلطان اکثر مایزع القرآن ، یعنی منع سلطان بیشتر از منع  
قرآن است

the Sultan, obeys God'.<sup>1</sup> People who defy the Sultan would be subjected to severe punishment on the Day of Judgement".<sup>2</sup>

If on one side obedience to the ruler was demanded as a religious obligation, rebellion also could be justified on the basis of a charge of heresy and innovation. The way 'Iṣāmi<sup>3</sup> brings charges of heresy and blood-thirstiness against Muhammad bin Tughluq in order to justify Bahmanid rebellion against him shows that religious vagaries and tyranny were considered valid reasons for rebellion. When 'Ala-u'd-din Khalji (1296-1316) talked about founding a new religion, 'Ala-ul-Mulk told him that it would lead to rebellions which it would be impossible for any ruler to crush.<sup>4</sup> Akbar's religious innovations were also resented and they created an atmosphere of mistrust and discontent against him.<sup>5</sup> While there was only one pretender to the throne during the Sultanate period (Shamsuddin Mahmud, 1318). there were nine during the Mughal period. But none of them was successful. Examples of regicidism are also not wanting in the two Empires.

In summing up, it may be said that the Sultans sought to place kingship on a high dignified pedestal by emphasizing the 'divine origin' of their authority. The principle of legitimacy was fairly strong during the Mughal period but it could not check internecine struggle and conflict among the princes of the same family. While a monarch's power was unlimited, he could hardly ignore the religious sentiments of the people and could not ride rough-shod over the wishes of the nobility which sustained and supported the monarchy.

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1. It may be interesting to note that Muhammad bin Tughluq's coins issued from Deogir contain the inscription :

من اطاع السلطان فقد اطاع الرحمن

- See, Nelson Wright, p. 120.
2. *Strāj-ul Hidāya*, malfuz of Syed Jalal-u'd-din Bukhari Makhdum-i Jahanian, (MS.), f. 16a.
3. *Futūh-us Salāṭin*, p. 515.
4. *Tārikh-i Firuz Shahi*, pp. 265-67.
5. *Akbar Nāmah*, III, 397, 396-400, 532.

#### 4. *The Caliphate*

Technically and legally the Sultan of Delhi was a lieutenant of the Caliph and so caliphal recognition of his authority was a political obligation which had its own significance. Iltutmish was the first Sultan of Delhi who received explicit recognition from Baghdad in 1229.<sup>1</sup> Even after the fall of Baghdad in 1258 the Sultans of Delhi continued to inscribe the name of the Caliph Musta'sim on the coins as an expression of their feeling: "The Khalifa is dead, long live the Khalifa".<sup>2</sup> Both Muhammad bin Tughluq and Firuz Shah believed that a Sultan was to be treated as usurper unless recognized by the Caliph.<sup>3</sup> Muhammad bin Tughluq (1325-1531) stopped Friday and 'Eid prayers, removed his name from the coins<sup>4</sup> and the Khuṭba till he received recognition from the Caliph in Cairo. On receipt of this investiture, he took *bay'at* from the people with the Qur'ān, the *Mashāriq-ul Anwār* and the *manshūr* placed by his side.<sup>5</sup> During the time of Firuz (1351-1388), the Bahmanid ruler Sultan Muhammad somehow secured or forged a document conferring independent status on him in the Deccan. Firuz perhaps apprised the Caliph of the situation and Mutawakkil-il 'al-Allah sent a *farman* through Ashraf-u'd-din Rifā'i reiterating that the *manshur* for the whole of India had been conferred on him alone.<sup>6</sup> According to Barani, when this *manshur* came to the knowledge of the people they showed sincere obeisance to the Tughluq Sultan.<sup>7</sup> Later on the Caliph sent a *waqf namah*,—a unique document, sent for the first time,—in which all Indian territories were conferred on Firuz.<sup>8</sup> In 1517 when Ibrahim Lodi ascended the throne, the Abbasid Caliphate was overthrown by the

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1. See *Ṭabaqāt-i Nāṣiri*, p. 174 for the celebrations on this occasion.
  2. See R.P. Tripathi, *Some Aspects of Muslim Administration in India* p. 37.
  3. Barani, *Tārīkh-i Firuz Shahi*, p. 491; *Futūḥāt-i Firuz Shahi*, p. 18.
  4. Barani, p. 492.
  5. Barani, p. 495.
  6. *Sīrat-i Firuz Shahi*, MS. Bankipur Library, f. 141.
  7. *Tārīkh-i Firuz Shahi*, pp. 598-99.
  8. *Strat-i Firuz Shahi*, MS. f. 41.

Ottomans. The Mughals put the idea of a suzerain Caliph to an end. Akbar's *maḥḍar*<sup>1</sup> was an attempt to consolidate political power independent of the Ottoman recognition—nay, in a way, he claimed that status for himself. The *maḥḍar* refers to him as *Sultān-ul Islām*, a title used by the Ottomans.

### *Changing Patterns of the Governing Class*

The pattern of the governing class changed from dynasty to dynasty depending on the political situation and the personal preferences of a ruler. The exclusive racial character of the Ilbarite bureaucracy was changed by the Khaljis who threw offices open to talent and a large number of new converts and others came to occupy important offices in administration, but the loyalty of this group was skin-deep and the involvement of men like Malik Kafur and Khusrau Khan in the deaths of their benefactor Sultans, created in the minds of the people a distrust against people of such background.<sup>2</sup> Muhammad bin Tughluq admitted Hindus to high posts in administration. Under him the governing class became really broadbased and came to comprise diverse elements like members of the old families, converts, foreigners, Afghans, *sadah-amirs* and Hindu officers.<sup>3</sup> According to Shihab-u'd-din al-'Umari, the Sultan's army itself consisted of Turks, Khitais, Persians and Indians.<sup>4</sup> But there was an inherent weakness in this composition of the governing class. When people of different races, religions, regions and background came to constitute the ruling oligarchy, homogeneity of the governing class disappeared. It was a

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1. Several studies of *Maḥzar* have been made by Indian and European scholars and the document has been examined from different angles. The fact however remains that the Khilafat context of the document is too obvious to be ignored. For a study of *maḥzar*, *J.R.A.S.*, October 1924, p. 591 *et seqq.* F.W. Buckler's article on *maḥḍar*; Tripathi, *Some Aspects*, pp. 156 *et seqq.*; Journal U.P.H.S. Vol. XVI, S. Nurul Hasan's article, *The Maḥzar of Akbar's Reign*, *Islamic Culture*, July 1973, Rafat Bilgrami, *Akbar's Maḥḍar of 1579*.
  2. *Tārīkh-i Firuz Shahi*, p. 409.
  3. See, *Delhi Sultanate*, (*Comprehensive History of India*, Vol. V) Nizami : Muhammad bin Tughluq, pp. 561-565.
  4. *Masālik-ul Abṣār*, Eng. tr. O. Spies, p. 26.

strange tussle between two conflicting forces : if the base of the governing class was widened so to include in it people from different backgrounds, the stability and compactness of the political set-up received a set-back ; if, in the alternative, the circle was narrowed down, limited religiously or racially, it resulted in compactness and stability no doubt, but limited the appeal of the government and made it less representative of the different elements of the Indian population.

It was this heterogeneous character of the governing class which led to disintegration of the Delhi Sultanate. Many of the provincial governments were founded by these disgruntled elements of the nobility.

When the Mughals came to power the problem of governing class<sup>1</sup> appeared more complicated than before. There were Turks, Mughals, Afghans, Persians, Indian Muslims and Rajputs struggling for supremacy in the State. The Muslim sections of the nobility were involved in internecine struggles and their conspiratorial activities were a source of constant embarrassment to the Mughal rulers. Akbar sought to use the Rajputs as a counterpoise against the Muslim nobility. It was not an unique experiment. Under almost identical circumstances Muhammad bin Tughluq had to create *amiran-i sadah* to offset the power of the old Muslim noble families. The induction of the Rajputs into the circle of the Mughal governing class strengthened the foundations of Mughal polity in India. The Mughals buttressed their relations with the Rajputs through matrimonial alliances, and thus they succeeded in giving shape to a Mughal bureaucracy which, though comprising diverse elements, was knit together by a deep sense of loyalty to the Mughal ruling house. So long as strong rulers were at the helm of affairs these individual elements remained subdued and a higher sense of loyalty to the sovereign controlled their ambitious propensities, but as soon as the central

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1. For Mughal nobility, R.P. Khosla, *Mughal Kingship and Nobility*, pp. 225-293.

authority weakened, they started emphasizing their separate identity and began to fish in the troubled waters, throwing overboard all concepts of loyalty to the sovereign.

During the later Mughal period, conflict between the Irani-Turani nobles weakened the Mughal Government. The Sikhs, Rajputs, Shaikhs, Afghans, Iranis and Turanis who formed the bulk of the higher class of society, contributed equally to its fall.<sup>1</sup> An empire without a governing class was beyond the region of practical politics during the medieval times, while its balanced composition, tactful control and purposeful direction was a task which needed great vision and farsightedness. If the governing class was recruited from any specific racial, religious, regional or tribal source, it did not enlist the sympathies of other segments of population which felt ignored and isolated. If its composition was diversified, its homogeneity came to be undermined. Thus a ruler had to be very careful in determining the composition of his nobility. Merit, loyalty, support of diverse elements of the population were the three guiding principles which were constantly kept in view.

### *The Administrative Structure*

The administrative structure of the Delhi Sultanate was based on: (a) Islamic traditions as evolved during the Abbasid period and transmitted to the Delhi Sultans through the Samanids and the Ghaznavids, (b) Iranian traditions as imbibed and articulated by the minor dynasties, (c) Indian traditions as continued from generation to generation throughout the ages, and (d) Mongol traditions as adopted by the Sultans on the basis of either expediency or experience. The administration of the Sultanate of Delhi was thus an amalgam of diverse traditions. In names and nomenclature many of the institutions had either Abbasid or Iranian impact. The taxation system had all the terms of the classical period—*kharrāj*, *'ushr*, *zakāt*,

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1. Ibn Hasan, *Central Structure of the Mughal Empire*, p. 360.

*jiziyah*, *khumis*<sup>1</sup>—but their connotation had undergone great change; for instance, the term *kharaj* was used for land-tax irrespective of the distinction of '*ushri*'<sup>2</sup> and *kharāji* land and *jiziyah* had become a part of the total incidence of taxation and was included in *kharāj i muqāsimah*<sup>3</sup>. The officials of the centre had titles mostly used by the Samanids and the Ghaznavids. The ceremonials, customs and procedures at the court were soaked in Iranian traditions. The army was organized on the decimal system.<sup>4</sup> In the rural areas many of the officers of the Hindu period<sup>5</sup> continued, though their duties and functions underwent some change with the policies of the Sultans.

The royal household with its officers, like *wakil-i dar*, *amir-i hājib* and *amir-i majlis* played an important part in the administration of the country. The slaves<sup>6</sup> constituted an integral part of the royal household and two Delhi Sultans—Iltutmish and Balban—initially belonged to the imperial slave-household.

During the Sultanate period the administrative system was largely based on *iqṭa's*. In fact it was necessitated by the feudal set-up of the Rajput states which they had overthrown and replaced. It was through the assignment of *iqṭa's* to

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1. For classical traditions, Frede Lokkegaard, *Islamic Taxation in the Classic Period*, Copenhagen, 1950.
  2. Two passing references to '*ushri*' land are found in medieval Indian literature, one during the time of Muhammad bin Qasim in Sindh (*Chach Namah*) and the other in Lahore during the time of Aibek (*Tārīkh-i Fakhruddīn Mubārak Shāh*, pp. 33-34). It is difficult to generalize on their basis.
  3. Abdul Hamid Muharrir Ghaznavi, '*Ilm-ul Hisāb*', MS. Rampur Library.
  4. *Tārīkh-i Firuz Shahi*, p. 145; see also, *Subh-ul-A'sha*, Eng. tr. O. Spies, p. 67.
  5. Like *mukhiya*, *patwari*, *balahar*, *khut*, *chaudhary*, etc.
  6. The procedure of recruitment and training of these slaves is described in detail by Nizamul Mulk, *Siyāsāt Nāmah*, Tehran ed., pp. 129-146.

Turkish officers that the early Sultans could integrate and link up to a centre areas which had earlier been organized and administered on a feudal basis. The *iqta'* system thus proved an effective local apparatus to integrate and consolidate the Sultanate. The principle of hereditary *iqta'* was rejected by the rulers and transfers, promotions and demotions by the Sultan kept the institution under centralized control.<sup>1</sup> The institution of *iqta'* however passed through various phases and during the later Sultanate period encouraged fissiparous tendencies which resulted in the rise of the provincial kingdoms.

The Mughal administration was, however, organized on the basis of *manṣabs*.<sup>2</sup> The *manṣab* (rank) of every officer was fixed in terms of contingent of troopers under his command. There being no distinction of civil and military services, a *manṣabdār* was expected to perform civil or military duties in accordance with the orders of the Emperor. Akbar divided the *manṣabs* into 36 grades;<sup>3</sup> the lowest rank was that of a *manṣabdār* of 10, and the highest that of 10,000. The commands above five thousand were generally given to the princes. According to I.H. Qureshi, in its basic conception the *manṣabdārī* system was a Turkish institution and had affinities with similar institutions built up by the Mamelukes of Egypt and the Ottomans.<sup>4</sup>

The Sultan was assisted by ministers in carrying on the administration of the Empire. The Wazir<sup>5</sup> was the chief minister. In the Sultanate of Delhi one comes across wazirs of both the traditional types: the *wazir-i tafwid* (with unlimited

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1. See Nizami, *Religion and Politics in India during the thirteenth century*, pp. 128-131.

2. For *manṣabdārī* system, Abdul Aziz, *The Mansabdari System and the Mughal Army*, Delhi reprint, 1972. Qureshi, *The Administration of the Mughal Empire*, pp. 88-113; *J.R.A.S.* October 1936, Moreland's article "Rank (Mansab) in the Mogul State Service."

3. This number represents the numerical value of the word "Allah" according to the *abjad*.

4. *Administration of the Mughal Empire*, p. 113.

5. For Wazir, see *Ādāb-ul Harb*, ed. Ahmad Sohaili Khwansari. Tehran, p. 128 *et seq.*



power) and the *wazir-i tanfidh* (with limited delegated authority). To restrict the power of the Wazir, Balban gave the office to a person who was ignorant of financial matters and made the *rawat-i 'arz* (Muster Master) absolutely independent in his department. However, under 'Ala-u'd-din Khalji the military aspect of the Wizarat came to be highlighted. But Khusrau Khan's rise to power created a strong feeling that Wizarat should not be allowed to become a stepping-stone to kingship. Ghiyas-u'd-din Tughluq made a new experiment of appointing a 'Council of three Wazirs.' No doubt under Khwaja Jahan and Khan-i Jahan Maqbul the institution of Wizarat assumed great prestige but the policy of the Tughluq Sultans to keep the army under the control of the *diwan-i 'arz*, rather than the Wazir, considerably reduced his power.

Other important ministries were *diwan-i risalat* (which dealt with religious matters, trusts, stipends to scholars) presided over by *sadr-us sudur* who was generally also the *qazi-i mumalik*. The *diwan-i 'arz*<sup>1</sup> (army department) was under *'ariz-i mumalik*. The *diwan-i insha* (royal correspondence) was under *dabir-i khas*. The *barid-i mamalik* was head of the State news agency and had a network of *barids* spread over the whole Empire.

The provinces were administered and looked after by the governors. The provinces were sometimes divided into *shiqs* or *sarkars* and *parganahs*. The *parganah* was like *qasbah*, an aggregate of villages. The local administrative apparatus continued from pre-Sultanate days. The *khuts*, *muqaddams* and *chaudhris* enjoyed great privileges. There were relay stations at a distance of every 4 *kroh* which kept the centre well posted with developments in far-flung parts of the Empire. It was through this *ulagh* that fruits from Khurasan were brought to India and the Ganges water was carried to Sultan

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1. See Qureshi, *Administration of the Sultanate of Delhi*, 4th ed. pp. 137-138.

Muhammad bin Tughluq in Daulatabad.<sup>1</sup> A fairly efficient and effective system of long arterial roads helped the Centre in maintaining peace in the Empire.

The land-tax varied from time to time, the maximum realized during the reign of 'Ala-u'd-din Khalji being 50% of the produce. Two methods of assessment were known to the Sultanate; measurement and sharing, but in some cases appraisement was also adopted.<sup>2</sup> Payment of taxes was either in cash or in kind. The Tughluq Sultans displayed keen interest in agricultural problems and formulated an elaborate agrarian policy. Muhammad bin Tughluq adopted several methods, collective farming, farming by contract, etc. to meet famine conditions. A department called *diwan-i amir kuhi* dealt with agrarian matters under Iltutmish, Jalal-u'd-din Khalji and Muhammad bin Tughluq.<sup>3</sup> Muhammad bin Tughluq framed *asalib* to develop barren areas and help cultivators. Firuz Shah initiated a vigorous policy of providing irrigation facilities, canals, aqueducts, etc. and levied a tax known as *haqq-i sharb*<sup>4</sup> to meet the expenditure on his irrigation projects. During the last phase of the Delhi Sultanate the practice of tax-farming<sup>5</sup> added to the problems of the government.

The establishment of the Delhi Sultanate was followed, as indicated earlier, by the rise of new cities and a new fillip was given to trade and commerce. Large number of traders from foreign lands visited India and carried on their lucrative trade, while large number of Indian merchants went to Central Asia

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1. See Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, II, pp. 3, 4.

2. These three methods of assessment were known to ancient India also and were practised, see U.N. Ghoshal, *The Agrarian System in Ancient India*, Calcutta, 1930, pp. 26-27. Islamic parallels to these methods may be found in *kharāj-i muqāsimah*, *ḥadr*, *khāraj-i muqāṭi'ah*.

3. *Ṭabaqāt-i Nāstri*, p. 177, Barani, p. 281.

4. 'Afif, *Tārīkh-i Firuz Shahi*, pp. 129-130.

5. The system of farming dates back to ancient India and was practised by Muslims also before they came to India, see Qureshi, *Administration of the Sultanate of Delhi*, Karachi 4th ed. p. 121.

and West Asian countries for trade. Muhammad bin Tughluq is reported to have abolished import duty and, according to Hamdullah Mustaufi, gold could be taken out from India in any quantity.<sup>1</sup>

The army organization of the Delhi Sultanate was based on the concept of a strong standing army, centrally administered. Fakhr-i Mudabbir has pointed out in detail the role of the horse in the army organization of his day in his *Adāb-ul Harb*.<sup>2</sup> It was in fact the 'age of the horse'<sup>3</sup> and a well-trained, swift moving cavalry with tremendous striking power was the forte of the Sultanate. The Delhi army used grenades, fire-works and rockets against Timur. *Kushkangir*, a crude form of cannon, was used during the thirteenth century. The provincial kingdoms of Gujarat and the Deccan had made some progress in the use of artillery but the Sultanate of Delhi very much lagged behind in it as is clear from the *Bābur Namah*.<sup>4</sup>

Every town had a *qādī* who administered justice.<sup>5</sup> In rural areas the Hindu inhabitants enjoyed a kind of autonomy under the chieftainship of the local Hindu officers. The *mūhtasib* was charged with the duty of suppressing illegal practices and immoral activities. Balban, 'Ālā-u'd-din Khalji and Muhammad bin Tughluq laid great emphasis on the institution of *ihtisāb*.

The Mughal administrative machinery which kept the country under control for centuries was elaborate and during the days of its ascendancy efficient. The emperor was himself the head of the administration. His power was unlimited and

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1. *Nuzhat al-Qulūb*, tr. Le Strange, p. 222.

2. Edited by Ahmad Sohaili Khwansari, Tehran.

3. In contemporary Sanskrit literature the Turks are referred to as '*ashvapatis*,' 'Lord of the Horse'.

4. *Memoirs of Babur*, II, pp. 183-188.

5. For details of judicial administration, see M.B. Ahmad, *The Administration of Justice in Medieval India*, Aligarh 1941; Wahed Husain, *Administration of Justice during the Muslim Rule in India*, Calcutta, 1934.

short of assassination or rebellion there was no method to remove him.

At the top of Mughal administration was the *wakil*, who was the chief adviser of the emperor. There were six principal departments and three minor offices of the Mughal administration: (1) the Exchequer and Revenue (headed by the *Wāzīr* also called *diwān i kul* or *diwān-i a'lā*), (2) the Imperial Household (under the *Khān-i Sāmān*), (3) the Military Pay and Accounts Office (under *Mir Bakhshi*), (4) Judiciary (under the *Qādi-ul Quddat*), (5) Religious Endowments and Charities (under *Sādr-uṣṣudūr*), (6) Censorship of Public Morals (under *Muhtasib*).<sup>1</sup>

Three minor offices were: (1) the Artillery (under *Mir-i Ātish*) (2) Intelligence and correspondence (under *Dārogha-i Dāk Chauki*) and (3) the Mint (under a *Dārogha*). There were other minor departments which dealt with forests (*Mir Bars*), studs (*Akt Begi*) navy, (*Mir Bahri*) etc.

Literature on specific laws is not much, though the *Dastūr-ul 'amals*, the twelve Ordinances of Jahangir, the *Fātawā-i Ālamgiri* throw considerable light on the law and procedure. The *fārmans*, *parwānas* and other official documents are available in thousands and throw valuable light on the actual working of the Mughal Government.

There was no hereditary nobility in India, though the descendants of a deceased noble often succeeded in obtaining a rank. The law of escheat, which was against the Mongol tradition, was enforced by the Mughal rulers. This had a very pernicious effect on the character and activities of the nobles who squandered away their wealth in extravagant and luxurious pursuits.

The administrative machinery in the provinces of the

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1. For Ottoman institutions, see S.J. Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, Vol. I, pp. 115-128.

Mughal Empire was an exact miniature of the Central government.<sup>1</sup>

In an agricultural country like India, the main source of state income was bound to be land revenue. Land reforms and revenue assessment measures, therefore, constituted the primary concern of the Mughal government. Sher Shah Suri, the Afghan ruler, had applied his mind to the problem in right earnest. Later Akbar undertook the task of putting revenue administration on sound lines and appointed experienced financiers like Muzaffar Khan Turbati and Todar Mal to reform the system. Lands were surveyed with *jartbs* of bamboos and were classified as *polaj* (continuous cultivation), *parauti* (nedeed rest for 1 or 2 years to recover fertility), *chachar* (rest for 3 or 4 years), and *banjar* (uncultivated for 5 years) according to their fertility. Each of the first three classes was sub-divided into three grades and the average produce of the class was calculated from the mean of the three grades in it. Only the area under actual cultivation was assessed for purposes of taxation. The state-demand was 1/3 of the produce, payable either in cash or in kind. The revenue officials '*āmil*, *bitikchi*, *potdār*, *qānūngo*, *patwāri* were instructed to be careful in assessment and collection of land revenue. Corrupt officers were sternly dealt with.

Though there is some difference of opinion among scholars on this point, it seems almost certain that both during the Sultanate and the Mughal periods the ownership of land vested in the peasant.<sup>2</sup>

### 7. State and Religion

Both the Delhi Sultanate and the Mughal Empire were basically secular in their approach and functioning. No clerical

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1. For detailed study, P. Saran, *Provincial Government of the Mughals*, second ed. Bombay, 1973.
  2. See Qureshi, *The Administration of the Sultanate of Delhi*, 4th ed., pp. 204-206; *The Administration of the Mughal Empire*, pp. 281-294.

group guided their policies or controlled the administration of these governments, which functioned as political expediency demanded<sup>1</sup> A theologian-scholar of the 14th century, Ziauddin Barani, confessed that the sultanate had to frame laws (*zawābit*) which had no sanction in *shari'at* but without which no government could be run.<sup>2</sup> Significantly enough he made this observation during the reign of Firuz Shah Tughluq when it is generally supposed that the administrative machinery was brought in line with the requirements of the *shari'at*. He wrote: "After the Pious Caliphs, the kings of Islam were faced with two irreconcilable alternatives, both necessary for the religion and state. If they followed the traditions of the Prophet and his mode of life, kingship and government would be impossible for them. On the other hand, if in their customs of sitting, standing, eating, dressing and in their general mode of life they followed the policy of the Iranian Emperors, which breaks the headstrong, subdues rebels and is necessary for the execution of state-orders, it would be necessary to violate the traditions of the Prophet, which are the foundation and the basis of the faith."<sup>3</sup>

Religious attitudes of the individual rulers did in certain measure influence the general spirit of the administration, but to bring the administration in line with the *shari'at* laws meant a reversal of processes which had been operating in political life since the emergence of the *sultanate* and which had eventually created a gulf between Muslim law and practice. Firuz Shah Tughluq and Aurangzeb could not, and in fact did not, subordinate their policies to religion, but their religious attitudes did have an impact on the general atmosphere. A ruler's religious attitudes and interests could, at best, find expression in the general atmosphere of the court, some tightening of the *ihtisāb* machinery and larger number of religious

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1. 'Ala-u'd-din Khalji told 'Alaul Mulk: "I do not know what is lawful or unlawful. Whatever I consider necessary for the welfare of the State that I decree." *Tārīkh-i Firuz Shahi*, p. 290 *et seq.*
  2. *Fatāwa-i Jahāndāri*, Eng. tr., pp. 39-41.
  3. *Fatāwa-i Jahāndāri*, Eng. tr., p. 39.

endowments and stipends. It was hardly reflected in any branch of their administration, civil, military or revenue.

Both these empires had religious and quasi-religious departments to cater to the religious needs of the people ; there were endowments for mosques, *madrasahs*, *ribāts*, *khānqāhs*, *dā'erahs* and *zawiāhs*, and individual saints and 'ulamā' who were called *lashkar-i du'ā* had their own *madad ma'āsh* and *a'ima* grants, but the strings of administration were always in secular hands and the rulers were guided by their secular instincts in dealing with matters of administration.

In India a Muslim ruler had to formulate his policies in the midst of conflicting demands and expectations of the different sections of the population. The fact that majority of the population was non-Muslim could not be overlooked and was as relevant in dealing with a political situation as the fact that the Muslim community, which in ultimate analysis constituted the main prop of the State, expected its rulers to uphold their religion. The Arab conquerors of Sind had clarified in the very beginning their basic approach in this regard. The Hindus were accorded the status of *شامبه اهل كتاب*, people resembling the *ahl-i Kitāb*, and were given full religious liberty concerning their mode of prayer, construction of new and repair of old houses of worship and were confirmed in their posts.<sup>1</sup> Though during the Sultanate and the Mughal periods, sometimes discordant notes were struck by 'ulama', like Syed Nur u'd-din Mubark, Qaḍi Mughis and Zia-u'd-din Barani, the rulers did not pay any heed to their exhortations. Generally, with few exceptions, the policy proceeded on the lines enunciated by the Arabs in Sind. Some rulers like Muhammad bin Tughluq and Akbar displayed great vision and large-heartedness in dealing with the Hindus. They participated in their festivals, visited their religious centres, extended patronage to

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1. See the Brahmanabad Declaration, *Chach Nāmah*, ed. Daudpota, p. 209 *et seq.*

their religious thinkers and associated them in large numbers in the administration of the country.

Some rulers like 'Ala-u'd-din Khalji and Akbar thought of founding new religions in order to tide over the anomalies of the situation and in order to buttress their personal position. But such a venture did not succeed. 'Ala-u'd-din Khalji was warned by 'Alaul Mulk of the widespread discontent that was bound to follow the promulgation of new religion ; Akbar discovered to his great embarrassment that his experiment of combining religious and political leadership had in fact shaken the foundations of his power.

Two aphorisms are very often referred to by medieval Indian writers : (a) الناس على دين ملوكهم<sup>1</sup> (people follow the religion or ways of their rulers) and (b) الدين و الملك توأمان<sup>2</sup> (Religion and State are twins). The first never meant that people were blind followers of the religious ways of their rulers or that the religious vagaries of rulers could be tolerated by the people. The second never implied that a ruler could assume religious leadership also. These were moral exhortations meaning that if a ruler deviated from the path of rectitude, people also were affected by it and his waywardness found its way in them also. The second aphorism drew attention to the religious obligations of a sultan.

A principle of religious co-existence was evolved in medieval India. When Shaikh Nizam-u'd-din Auliya saw Hindus

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1. Barani, p 130; Nizami, *Salātin-i Dehli Kay Madhhabī Rujhānat*, p 47.
  2. Mir Khurd, *Siyar-ul auliya*, p. 196. Muhammad bin Tughluq often repeated this. The Ilkhanid Sultan, Abu Sa'id, mentioned it as a sound principle in his letter to the Tughluq Sultan. See *Bayaq-i Tajuddin Wazir*, Danishgah-i Isfahan, p. 410. Barani, however, observes : "A careful reflection upon the character of the Kings and those near them leaves us in no doubt that prophethood is the perfection of religion and that Kingship is the perfection of worldly good fortune. These two pefections are opposed and contradictory to each other, and their combination is not within the bounds of possibility". Eng. tr., p. 39.



worshipping idols, he said : "Members of every community have their own way of worship."<sup>1</sup> During the Mughal period, Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi declared : "Muslims should follow their and Hindus their religion. The Qur'ānic verse : "For you, yours and for me my religion' is the principle."<sup>2</sup> This continued to be the basis of all social and political arrangement during the medieval period.

The rulers had no doubt a difficult job to maintain a balance and satisfy their own community and the other religious communities at the same time. Muhammad bin Tughluq's efforts to win Hindu confidence by social and religious contacts and admission to government services disappointed the Muslim religious classes and a *fatwā* was issued against him justifying rebellion against his authority. Similarly, Akbar's policy of bringing about a synthesis of Hinduism and Islam provoked bitter reaction from the Mussalmans, and was disapproved by the Hindus also.

Broadly speaking the Muslim religious classes comprised two groups : the '*ulama* and the *mashā'ikh*. The '*ulama* again were of different types, some spent their time in quiet academic pursuits, devoted to study and instruction ; others served the state and got employment as *mufti*, *qādi*, *ṣadr-i jahān*, *imām*, *mudhakkir*, *muhtasib*, etc. This latter section of the '*ulama* generally chimed in the moods of the rulers and gave *fatwās* in support of their policies. Some '*ulama* issued a *fatwā* condoning non-observance of fasts by Kaiqubad,<sup>3</sup> and the '*ulama* of Akbar's courts issued a *maḥzar* declaring a just ruler (*imām-i 'ādil*) to be above an interpreter of *shari'at* law (*mujtahid*). But even in this group of '*ulama* one sometimes finds scholars with integrity and religious awareness. A group of '*ulama*' waited upon Iltutmish to enquire if he

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1. *Tuzuk-i Jahangiri*.

مر قوم راست راہ دینے و قبلہ کا

2. *Maktūbat-i Mujaddid Alf-i Thāni*, Vol. I, p. 65.

3. Barani, p. 54.

had been properly manumitted,<sup>1</sup> and an 'ālim, Mian 'Abdullah, told Sultan Sikandar Lodi that destroying an old temple was contrary to *sharī'at* law.<sup>2</sup> Some 'ulama who, on their own, or on being engaged by rulers or nobles took to compilation of compendiums of law (*fatāwa*) did their job with great integrity, but it is significant that their works did not subject the life or activities of the rulers to a searching scrutiny in the light of *sharī'at*. From the *Niṣāb al-Iḥtiṣāb* of Ziauddin Sunnami and the *Fatāwā-i Tātār Khāniya* of 'Alim b. Ala to the *Fatāwā-i Ālamgiri* this appears to be the general trend. No 'ālim studied the institution of *sultanate* or the behaviour of the sultans in the light of the *sharī'at* laws. This resulted in taking away the dynamic character of Islamic law in the sphere of political life.

The Sufi saints had an entirely different attitude towards the state and the sultans, but this attitude underwent change during the different periods of Indian history and in fact varied from order to order. The early Chishti saints, Shaikh Mu'īnuddin Chishti of Ajmer, Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya of Delhi and others, believed in keeping away from the state and so they rejected government employment, state stipends and court visits.<sup>3</sup> But another contemporary order of mystics, the Suhrawardi *silsilah*, considered such an attitude irrelevant and mixed with the rulers and the bureaucracy and accepted government grants and honorific titles.<sup>4</sup> The Naqshbandi *silsilah* stood for an entirely different approach towards the state and the rulers. When Akbar started meddling in religious matters and sought to subordinate religion to the exigencies of the political situation, Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi, popularly known as Mujaddid Alf-i-Thāni, rose up against the policy of Akbar and exhorted the nobles to assert themselves in bringing about a change in the atmosphere of the court.<sup>5</sup> He declared that

1. Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, Urdu II. p. 52.

2. *Tarikh-i Da'ūdi*, pp 29-30; Ahmad Yadgar, *Tarikh-i Shahi*, pp. 30-31.

3. *Islamic Culture*, Vols. XXII-XXIV-1948, article by Nizami, *Early Indo-Muslim Mystics and their attitude towards the State*.

4. *Medieval India Quarterly*, Vol. I, No. I, pp. 56-70.

5. See *Islamic Culture*, Jan. 1965, article by Nizami, *Naqshbandi Influence on Mughal Rulers and Politics*, pp. 41-52.

“King is all-soul and people are all-body; if the soul goes wrong the whole body goes wrong.”<sup>1</sup> His movement did, in fact, force the Mughal sovereigns to stop meddling in religion in the way Akbar had done.

During the 18th century, it was Shah Waliullah of Delhi, a great scholar and sufi associated with the school of Mujaddid Alf-i-Thāni, who raised a clarion call against the wayward behaviour of the rulers and the nobility and approached almost every section of the population—common man, merchants, peasants, soldiers and others—to realize their importance and to set the social-political system in order. He considered himself to be divinely ordained to overthrow the existing system. He condemned the exploitation of the poor and declared that if concentration of wealth in the hands of a few was against public interest, it was necessary to set it in circulation.<sup>2</sup>

### *Resume*

The Delhi Sultanate and the Mughal Empire were basically secular in their spirit and conduct of administration.

The administrative structure of these empires was based on Islamic, Ghurid, Iranian, Mongol and Indian traditions. It was in fact, a “Perso-Arabic system in Indian setting”<sup>3</sup> and represented a blend of indigenous and extraneous elements evolved after years of experiment and trial.

The Delhi Sultanate looked upon the Caliph as the legal authority and maintained its contact with the Abbasids of Baghdad and Cairo. The Mughal rulers, however, developed an attitude of rivalry towards the Ottoman power and Akbar tried to arrogate that authority to himself.

The character and composition of the governing class went on changing from period to period and in certain respects from

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1. *Maktūbat-i Mujaddid Alf-i Thani*, Vol. I, p. 18, II, p. 135.

2. See, Nizami, *Shah Waliullah Kay Siyasi Maktūbat*, pp. 38-39.

3. J. N. Sarkar, *Mughal Administration*, p. 5.

ruler to ruler. Much of the political stability depended upon the attitude of the governing class. The rulers were confronted with a baffling situation. If the governing class remained confined to any racial, regional or religious group, its appeal was naturally narrowed down in a vast country like India, with its multi-racial, multi-religious and multi-lingual set-up. But it nevertheless maintained a homogeneity. If the governing class came to comprise other elements of Indian social life also, it became more broad and appealed to local sentiments but in that case it lost its compactness and homogeneity.

The rulers of these empires had to formulate their policies in an atmosphere of conflicting demands. The Muslims expected the government to uphold religion and perform as many obligations of religious nature as possible. While the *Sultāns* and *Bādshāhs* tried to satisfy these expectations of the Muslims, they had to look to the aspirations of the Hindu population also. Shah Muhibbullah of Allahabad (ob. 1648), a great saint of the Chishti order, wrote to Dara Shukoh that a Muslim government had to be equally beneficent to the Muslims and the non-Muslims.<sup>1</sup> A state looking after Muslim interests alone could never expand, could never strike its roots into the soil.

The Muslim religious class which comprised chiefly '*ulama* and mystics kept the spiritual and moral vigour of the community intact. The '*ulama* mostly joined hands with the state and supported its policies; the mystics generally kept aloof but raised their voice if the state drifted away from its moorings and disregarded Muslim religious sentiments. Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi and Shah Waliullah raised their voice against the behaviour of the rulers and the governing classes.

The way in which State, Religion and Politics act, react and interact during the period of these two great empires of medieval India lends a peculiar charm to the history of the period and may well be compared with other contemporary Asiatic states.

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1. *Maktūbat-i Shah Muhibbullah Allahabadi* (MS).

## *Aspects of Muslim Political Thought in India During the Fourteenth Century\**

It may be stated at the very outset that barring the *Fatāwa-i-Jahandāri*<sup>1</sup> of Zia Barani and the *Zakhirat-ul-Muluk*<sup>2</sup> of Sayyid 'Ali Hamadāni, there is no book on political theory written in India during the fourteenth century. We have, therefore, to conclude about men's thoughts from their actions as no other method is possible.

The fall of the Turkish oligarchy in 1290 meant the collapse of a political system and the end of a political theory : the Turkish State and the exclusive monopoly of a racial

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1. Persian Text edited by Dr. Mrs. A.S. Khan, Lahore, 1972; English translation by Prof. M. Habib and Dr. Mrs. Khan, *The Political Theory of the Delhi Sultanate*, Kitab Mahal, Allahabad.
2. Afghani Press, Amritsar, 1321 A.H.

group.<sup>1</sup>

In the decades that followed, exigencies of the Indian situation and expectations of the Muslim religious and political groups made conflicting demands on the policies of the rulers. Their attempts to resolve, reject, or rise above this conflict resulted in an interesting interplay of religio-political forces which if carefully followed through a maze of actions and reactions, provide a veritable background to some of the problems of religion and politics which assumed great significance in subsequent centuries, particularly during the reign of Akbar.

For the consolidation of their political power the early Turkish Sultans had looked upon kingship as viceregency of God on earth,<sup>2</sup> had traced their origin to the legendary heroes of Persia<sup>3</sup> and had reserved important offices in the government as also the *iqṭas* mainly for the Turks. Any deviation from this policy was resented by the Turkish ruling group. In consequence of this political attitude, the Sultans could not attempt any substantial expansion of the territories brought under their control during the first wave of Muslim conquest

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1. Ethnically this group may not have been very homogeneous and well-knit but common destiny in a foreign land made it compact and conscious of its superior status. When Balban was put to work in royal stables, the Turks of the capital protested to Iltutmish on the ground that the assignment was *infra dig* for a ruling race (*Futuh-us Salatin*, Madras ed. p. 123). See *Tarikh-i Fakhruddin Mubarak Shah* for the position of Turks at home and abroad (pp. 35-36) and the honour and fortune that Indian conquest brought to them (p. 26). For their resentment against the entry of non-Turks to higher echelons of power (*Tabaqat-i Nāṣiri*, pp. 153-182, etc.; *Tarikh-i Firuz Shahi*, p. 38, etc.). Recruitment to the lower cadres of the army was, however, unavoidable (*Tarikh-i Fakhruddin Mubarak Shah*, p. 33; *Futuh us-Salatin*, pp. 139, 178 etc.). In the later Ilbarite period one comes across such names as Brinjantan, Hatya Paik (Barani, p. 210) and Rajni Paik (*Tarikh-i Mubarak Shahi*, pp. 58-9).
  2. Barani, pp. 34, 75.
  3. Barani, pp. 37, 146.

of northern India.<sup>1</sup> Expansion called for reorientation of political theory, a wider base for the State and identity with the Indian situation. The Khaljis who succeeded the Ilbarites, discarded the theory of birth and heredity as also the idea of racial superiority. The ethereal concept of the divine source of kingly power was surrendered to a more pragmatic approach to royal authority. Power belonged to one who had the capacity to hold it. A rebel was a rebel and needed no label of 'sinner' (عاصي)<sup>2</sup> for his condemnation. Monarchy was to thrive on its own inherent strength without any racial or religious prop. Jalāluddin had no hesitation in publicly admitting his plebian origin and in telling people that none of his ancestors had ever occupied the kingly office.<sup>3</sup> At one stage he thought of adopting the title of *Mujahid fi sabil Allah*<sup>4</sup> in order to sanctify his claim over the throne but gave up the idea, perhaps because it had to be proposed by the 'ulama and like some of his other measures would have offended the young Khaljis, like Ahmad Chap, who were anxious to highlight the element of military strength in the ascendancy of the Khaljis. 'Alāuddin's ambition was to emulate Alexander as a conqueror but he never bothered to trace his genealogy to any legendary hero. He demonstrated by his action that his title to the throne rested on his own strength to wield the sceptre<sup>5</sup> and

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1. Balban is reported to have said that he could not embark upon any scheme of conquest and extend his empire due to (a) the Mongol pressure and (b) the shortage of trained and dependable government servants to settle in new areas. If he sent such trained personnel from Delhi, the capital would be depleted of men of experience and confidence. *Tarikh-i Firuz Shahi*, p. 52.
  2. *Tabaqat-i Nasiri*, p. 116; *Adab ul-Harb*, ed. Ahmad Suhaili Khwansari, Tehran, p. 302.
  3. Barani, *Tarikh*, pp. 171, 186.
  4. Barani, *Tarikh*, pp. 196-97.
  5. It was in keeping with this attitude that when 'Alāuddin decided to give battle to Qutlugh Khwaja and entrusted his *harem* and treasures to the care of 'Alā ul-Mulk, he advised him thus : "Whoever—I or  
(Contd. on next page)

did not need any extraneous support. Ghazi Malik was raised to the throne because of his services as warden of the marches and effective defence against the Mongol incursions.<sup>1</sup> Rarely any ruling dynasty of northern India thereafter based its claim to the throne on birth or heredity.<sup>2</sup> The founders of the provincial kingdoms considered their military strength their sole title to be on the throne and rarely fabricated any genealogies to buttress their position.

Change in the concept of political power brought about a change in the character and composition of the governing class. 'Merit' and 'loyalty' replaced race and religion as the basis of recruitment. The age of Sher Khan, Malik Chajju,

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he—succeeds (in the conflict) and is victorious, you kiss the keys of the city-gates and treasury and place them before him and become his loyal servant." Barani, *Tarikh*, p. 258.

1. Barani, *Tarikh*, pp. 422-3.

2. When 'Isāmi (*Futuh us-Salatin*, p. 110) puts the following reply in the mouth of Yalduz, he, in fact, expresses his reaction in terms of 14th century attitudes:

تودانی که امروز ملک جهان  
کسے راست کو بیش دارد توان  
گذشت آن که ضبطش بمیراث بود  
ملک دیر شد کین مراسم ربود

(The contemporary chronicler Minhaj makes no mention of such a reply)

Bughra Khan told his son Kaiqubad—

در نسب از ملک خلافت مراست  
از پدرم کے رسد این فن بتو ؟  
تو خلفی سر بخلافت خطا است  
از پدر من بمن — از من بتو

(contd on next page)



Qutbuddin Hasan and Fakhruddin yielded place to that of Malik Kafur., Panjmani, Malik Manak, Khusrau Khan, Ghazi Malik and others. The new governing class initiated an era of imperialism<sup>1</sup> and took upon itself the responsibility of extending the frontiers of the Sultanate side by side with the base of the State. 'Alauddin Khalji pleaded ignorance of religious law and pursued his policies in the light of the exigencies of the state and the welfare of the people,<sup>2</sup> but when the State acted as the censor of public morals, he was guided by the principles of *ihtisāb*<sup>3</sup> and in matters of public welfare, his religious instincts also played a part<sup>4</sup> He reduced the influence of the 'ulama,<sup>5</sup> who had become a power in politics in the earlier regimes<sup>6</sup> He made a cautious attempt to probe into the thought of the orthodox theologians if they realized the nature of the problem facing a Sultan and responded to

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*Qir'ān-us Sa'dain*, p. 115.

Kaiqubad wrote back to him :

ملک بمیراث نیابد کسے      تا نرزد تیغ دو دستی سے

(*Qir'ān-us-Sa'dain*, p. 118.

—thus giving a foretaste of the trends that were gathering momentum and were to become an accepted political principle in the decades to come. But in view of the contemporary attitude Kaiqubad established his claim on the ground that he was related to Iltutmish through his mother and the line of Iltutmish really merged in his person (p. 118).

1. Note, for instance, the role of Malik Kafur in the South, Panjmani in Gujarat (*Futuh us-Salatīn*, p. 287) and the position of Manak as *akhur bak-i maisara* (*Khazā'in ul-Futuh*, edited by Wahid Mirza, p. 38). Manak was perhaps the same slave who shielded Sultan 'Alauddin against the attack of the new Muslims. Barani, *Tarikh*, p. 273.
2. Barani, *Tarikh*, p. 296.
3. Barani, *Tarikh*, p. 296; *Khazā'in ul-Futuh*, pp. 17-18.
4. *Khair ul-Majalis*, p. 241
5. Barani, *Tarikh*, p. 289
6. See Nizami, *Religion and Politics in India during the thirteenth century*. pp. 171-75.

the need of the time by a fresh interpretation (*ijtihad*) of the situation,<sup>1</sup> but when he understood the difficulties involved in bringing about a change in the attitude of the 'ulama and realized his own limitations arising out of the ignorance of the religious law, he did not broach the subject again with the 'ulama.<sup>2</sup> To meet the situation created by the influx of gold and silver from the South and the resultant inflation and the unsettling effect of Mongol invasions on the economy of the country,<sup>3</sup> 'Alāuddin adopted monopolistic measures, controlled the sources of production and consumption, regulated the market, introduced rationing, fixed the prices of commodities on the basis of the production cost (*bar-āward*), converted the monopolies of the two chief Hindu mercantile communities—Nayaks and the Multanis—into state-controlled monopolies, brought about a coordination in the rural and urban economies, established direct contact with the peasant, increased the *khalsa* area, broke the power of intermediaries—*khuts*, *muqaddams* and *chaudhris*—and succeeded in bringing under his control as many aspects of individual and community life as possible.<sup>4</sup> Under him the area

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1. The fact that Qaḍī Muḡhith was not inclined to accord the position and the rights of a *dhimmi* to the Hindus (Barani, pp. 290-291) shows that the 'ulama had even gone back from a realistically taken decision of the Arabs of Sind. See also, Maulana Sulaiman Nadvi, *Arab-o-Hind kay Ta'alluqat*, pp. 193-194.
  2. The impression that 'Alāuddin Khaljī was indifferent to religion or had scant respect for the injunctions of the *shari'at* is not borne out by contemporary opinion. Amir Khusrau (*Laila Majnun*, pp. 15-17; *Matla' ul-Anwar*, pp. 24-48; *Khazā' in ul-Futuh*, p. 6 *et seq.*), Amir Hasan (*Diwan*, pp. 453, 501, 534, 547, 550, etc.), 'Isāmi (*Futuh us-Salatin*, pp. 301, 605) and Hamid Qalandar (*Khair ul-Majalis*, pp. 241-42) are unanimous in lauding his interest in religion. The people of Delhi could not possibly have shown respect to his grave, if the contemporary opinion about his attitude towards religion had been against him.
  3. Barani, *Tarikh*, p. 255
  4. Barani's remark (p. 383) that after his death people were relieved from being asked: "Do this and do not do that; say this and do not say that; wear this and do not wear that; eat this and do not eat that; sell this and do not sell that"—shows the extent to which 'Alāuddin had curtailed individual freedom.

of state-control was widened as never before. If he could assume the religious leadership also, it would complete his control over human conscience and conduct and make the monarch supreme in all spheres. Plans for founding a new religion were therefore mooted in the early years of his reign but when 'Alā-ul Mulk warned him of widespread rebellions as a reaction, he gave up the idea.<sup>1</sup> Significantly enough, whenever any ruler of medieval India thought of a fundamental solution of his problems in the light of the Indian situation, his mind was driven towards assuming a role of religious leadership also—"a vain dream of autocrats" as Toynbee calls it. 'Alāuddin Khalji, Muhammad bin Tughluq<sup>2</sup> and Akbar<sup>3</sup> toyed with the idea at one stage or the other. Discussions about the relative role of 'Prophets' and 'Kings' in the contemporary religious literature are not without significance.<sup>4</sup>

'Alāuddin felt that contacts with the Ilkhanids of Persia would help him in dealing with the Mongols of Central Asia and in acquiring knowledge of the Mongol methods of warfare—of which his armies were ignorant,<sup>5</sup> and therefore he cultivated relations with them going a little out of his way also. He accorded a warm welcome to their envoy Rashiduddin Faḍlullah and assigned to him some villages, the revenues of which were remitted to him in his hometown through reliable merchants.<sup>6</sup> But when Uljaitu made a proposal for marriage with his daughter, 'Alāuddin took it as an insult and ordered

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1. Barani, pp. 265-66. See also Nizami, *Salatin-i Dehli kay madhhab-i rujhanat*, pp. 219-223.
  2. *Jawāmi' ul-Kalim*, p. 175.
  3. *Ā'in-i Akbari*, Blochmann, Vol. I, p. 172.
  4. Barani, *Tarikh*, pp. 265-67; Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi, *Ithbāt-i Nubuwwat*, Karachi, p. 6; Nizami, *Hayat-i Shaikh Abdul Haqq Muhaddith Dihlawi*, p. 301, for Shaikh's brochure on the theme, etc.
  5. Barani, p. 258.
  6. *Mukatabat-i Rashidi*, pp. 159-168. See also *Proceedings of the Colloquium on Rashid al-Din Fadhllallah*, Tehran, 1971, Nizami, *Rashid al-Din and India*, pp. 36-53. That Rashiduddin Faḍlullah had property in India also is confirmed by his *Wasīyat Namah*.

the envoys to be crushed under the feet of elephants.<sup>1</sup> It was an undiplomatic and rash act and he realized the folly of his action. It appears from a letter of 'Alāuddin addressed to Rashiduddin that perhaps his problems in this connection were solved through the good offices of the *wazir*. Apart from everything else, in an 'age of the horse,' the Sultans could hardly afford to cut off their contact with the horse breeding centres of Central Asia. The *Tarikh-i Ghazan Khan* refers to the frequent visits of the Indian traders to the lands of the Mongols.

In the execution of all his State policies 'Alāuddin did not discriminate between the Hindus and the Muslims. If on one side he forced the Muslims to surrender land held by them in *milk*, *inam* or *waqf*, he had no hesitation in stripping off the Hindu intermediaries also of their privileges. Admission of India-born Muslims and Hindus to the fold of the governing class, evolution of an economic policy which covered Hindus and Muslims alike,<sup>2</sup> and participation of all communities in the expansionist policies of the Sultanate created the proper climate for the development of a broad base for the State. Mubarak could not continue his father's policies in many spheres but the composition of the governing class remained not only unaffected but made definite advance in the direction of Indianization. Khusrau's *Nuh Siphir* reflects in a subtle manner the policy of the ruler in giving a broad political and cultural base to the State through identification with the Indian situation when he declares<sup>3</sup>

نیست هندو ارچہ کہ دین دار چو ما  
ہست بسے جائے با قرار چو ما

(Though the Hindu is not faithful like us, he nevertheless believes in many things in which we do).

1. Wassaf, *Tajziyat al-Amsar wa Tajziyat al-A'sar*, p. 528.

2. Barani, *Tarikh*, p. 310.

3. *Nuh Siphir*, ed. Wahid Mirza, p. 163.

At a time when Khusrau Khan and his Parwari supporters—Ahar Deva, Abar Deva, Amar, etc.—were a dominant factor in the political life of the capital,<sup>1</sup> such an approach was in keeping with the spirit of the court and the attitude of the Sultan. Official historians and court poets were expected to be in tune with this spirit. When Amir Khusrau was commissioned by Ghiyathuddin Tughluq to versify the events leading up to his accession, he surveyed the same historical landscape but from a different angle. He criticized the Parwaris and their supporters for their 'ungratefulness' and 'disloyalty' to their benefactor,<sup>2</sup> and, in keeping with the spirit of Ghazi Malik's movement, brought out the religious undertones of the struggle. But he did not conceal the fact that Khusrau Khan was supported by the Muslim nobles also<sup>3</sup> and a separate wing of Muslim soldiers was at his beck and call at the battlefield.<sup>4</sup> Analysed in its

1. *Tughluq Namah*, pp. 118-119; Barani, p. 411.

2. *Tughluq Namah*, pp. 56-57.

3. He refers to Yusuf Sufi, Qatla Khan, Shaista Khan, Khidr Khan and others as strong supporters of Khusrau Khan. Referring to Muslim soldiers in the army of Khusrau Khan, the poet observes : (p. 112)

چنان آمیخته با آن سیاهان  
که خیرات مسلمانان با گناہان

According to Barani consideration of worldly gains kept many nobles by the side of Khusrau Khan. (*Tarikh*, pp. 412-413). Malik Talbagh who was given a slap on his face by Mubarak Khalji for speaking ill of Khusrau Khan (Barani p. 401) became a strong supporter of Khusrau after his rise to power (Barani, p. 420).

4. *Tughluq Namah*, p. 93. Ghazi Malik was supported by the Khokars (*Tughluq Namah*, p. 128). Amir Khusrau thus describes (p. 128) the position and role of Ghazi Malik's forces :

دران هنگام کاخ را صلا بود

proper context, the tussle between Khusrau Khan and Ghazi Malik represented a conflict between the nobility of the period —the old noble families and those who had come to the forefront as a result of Mubarak Khalji's policy.<sup>1</sup> It is however a fact that the new nobility created by the Khaljis served the State well only so long as the centre was strong and the administrative machinery was fully in the grip of the Sultan. When the situation changed it threw overboard all principles of loyalty—Malik Kafur was suspected of having poisoned 'Alāuddin Khalji and Khusrau Khan brutally assassinated Mubarak Khalji and mercilessly killed every member of the 'Alai family. Barani wrote : 'Men of wisdom and understanding saw the evil results of bringing up and promoting slaveboys and catamites from the way in which Malik Naib and Khusrau Khan overthrew the families of Sultan 'Alāuddin and Sultan Qutbuddin'.<sup>2</sup> This created serious apprehensions about the role of

به يك جاگير و مومن در لا بود  
مسلمان بر مسلمان تبع كم زد  
مگر هندو به كهو كهو كين قدم زد

1. It was perhaps on this account that Ghazi Malik did not press matters to the extreme in dealing with the nobles who had supported Khusrau Khan. He adopted a policy in which they could return to his side without having to fight desperately for saving their necks. He expressed his sorrow at the death of some nobles who had fought for Khusrau Khan. When his soldiers brought the head of Qatla Khan (*Tughluq Namah*, p. 96) he could not help expressing his grief. He personally nursed a noble Tamar who was seriously wounded in the battle. *Tughluq Namah*, pp. 101-102.

It is significant that 'Ain ul-Mulk Māhru, who according to Ibn Buttūṭa, belonged to the Indian section of the nobility (*Rihla*, II, p. 67), supported Khusrau and got the title of 'Alam Khan (Barani, p. 410). He was readily taken back into the service of the Sultanate by Ghiyathuddin.

2. *Tarikh*, p. 409. Looking at these political developments in a different context, Barani blamed 'Alāuddin for establishing the regicidal tradition (p. 408).

this segment of nobility in the minds of the people and even their conversion to Islam came to be doubted.<sup>1</sup>

The rise of the Tughluqs marks a departure from Khalji policies in certain spheres and registers their elaboration in others. The class of 'ulama which had been relegated to the background came to reassert its position and no Sultan of Delhi could again adopt the same nonchalant attitude towards them which the Khaljis had adopted.<sup>2</sup> But the Tughluqs had been brought up in the Khalji traditions and were fully alive to the demands of political life. People had found in Ghiyathuddin a reincarnation of 'Alāuddin.<sup>3</sup> In fact the first two Tughluqs were greater expansionists in their attitude than their predecessors. But if the State came under the influence of those 'ulama who, like Qaḍī Muḡhith, had limited awareness of the exigencies of the political situation and narrowed its base their expansionist policies could never be pushed forward. Hence the need for a reassessment of the situation and framing afresh the policies of the government. Ghiyathuddin ruled for a brief period and did not have an opportunity to elaborate his policies, but his son entered upon the task with greater practical experience, unusual originality of mind (*tahkimat-i mujaddid*)<sup>4</sup> and a broader conspectus supplied by his international contacts.

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1. Amir Khusrau says about Yakhlakhi who was made governor of Samana by Mubarak Khalji :

چو هندو بود در دل کبر سان بود  
رک کبریش ز نار نهان بود

*Tughluq Nama*, p. 69. Barani calls Khusrau Khan "an irreligious slave boy". (p. 4111).

2. For the role of 'ulama during the Khalji and Tughluq periods see, Nizami, *Salatin-i Dehli kay madhhab-i ruḡhanat*, Delhi, 1958.
3. Barani, p. 245.
4. Barani, *Tarikh*, pp. 467, 470.

The destruction of the social and political fabric of medieval Islam at the hands of the Mongols evoked different reactions from the Muslim society. Some saw the crack of the dome in the Mongol devastations and submitted to the tyrannies of the situation. The mystics carved out their areas of work (*walayats*)<sup>1</sup> and took to moral and spiritual regeneration of Muslim society through reorganization of *silsilahs*. They eschewed politics completely. A fundamentalist section of theologians, particularly Ibn Taimiya (1263-1328) and others of his school of thought, applied their energies to the revival of Muslim political power by doing away with the dichotomy of religion and politics which, they argued, had deprived the State of the services of men of talent and integrity. They condemned the mystic approach as one of pacifism, inertia and submission to unfavourable situation, and advocated a movement for the revitalization of Muslim society by bringing together its various constituents—people, rulers, *'ulama*, etc.—and concentrating their energies towards the revival of Muslim political prestige. Reacting to these trends in contemporary Islam, Muhammad bin Tughluq opted for the course advised by Ibn Taimiya.<sup>2</sup> But the Indian situation had its own demands and its own limitations. Muhammad bin Tughluq tried to interweave these ideas into a common scheme of values and it is in the light of these conflicting demands on his policy that his reign forms a landmark in the history of the development of Indo-Muslim political thought. Barani failed to appreciate the real direction of his thought and the nature of his efforts to reconcile the contradictions in Indo-Muslim polity and after blaming him for trying to combine the role of a king with that of a prophet, declared him to be a 'mass of

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1. See *Maktubat-i Shaikh Sharafuddin Yahya Maneri*, Newal Kishore, 1315 A.H., p. 24 *et seq.*; *Maktubat-i Ashrafi*, (Letters of Syed Ashraf Jahangir Simnani) MS. Letter No. 73. See also Nizami, *Religion and Politics in India during the Thirteenth Century*, pp. 57, 175-76.
  2. Ibn Battuta informs us (p. 70) that one of the disciples of Ibn Taimiya, 'Abdul 'Aziz Ardbaili, had visited the court of Muhammad bin Tughluq and the Sultan was so deeply impressed by him that he had kissed his feet in the *darbar*.



inconsistencies'. Far from being 'a mixture of opposites' himself, he tried to resolve one of the most puzzling contradictions of medieval political life—identification with the Indian situation and fulfilling the role of a Muslim ruler. The task had baffled his predecessors, but he embarked upon it confident that a new spirit of *ijtihād* could guide his steps where other had failed or faltered.

Muhammad bin Tughluq's political thought worked within three perimeters : (1) The Sultanate would have to define its position and perform its obligations in the broader framework of Muslim polity—its relationship with *khilafat*, its responsibilities towards the Muslim faith, and the role of religious classes in administration. With these aims in view he laid great emphasis on the legal aspect of the institution of *khilafat*.<sup>1</sup> May be that at some stage he used the concept of *khilafat* as a means to buttress his position against discontent for his measures, but in his approach towards the institution of *khilafat* he was sincere and, as Ibn Baṭṭuṭa says, it was based on his faith (اعتقاد). His teacher Qutluḡ Khan is reported to have impressed upon his mind the need of caliphal recognition of authority for the Sultans. According to *Sirat-i Firuz Shahi*, his views about *khilafat* were the result of his extensive study (بکثرت مطالعه کتب).<sup>2</sup> Till he established contact with the Caliph at Cairo and received *manshūr* from him, he discontinued Friday and 'Eid prayers in Indian mosques and removed his own name from the coins.<sup>3</sup> When the Caliph granted the investiture to him, he took *bay'at* from the people with the Qur'ān, the *Mashāriq-ul Anwār* and the *manshūr* placed by his side.<sup>4</sup> The Friday prayers were re-introduced

1. Barani, *Tarikh*, pp. 491-23; see also *Rihla*, Cairo ed., 1928, II, p. 43; *Qaṣā'id-i Badr-i Chach*, pp. 14-15; *Sirat-i Firuz Shahi*, Bankipur MS.

2. *Sirat-i Firuz Shahi*, f. 139.

3. Barani, *Tarikh*, p. 492.

'Isāmi is unfair to the Sultan when he charges him of stopping prayers out account of his irreligious attitude. *Futuh us-Salatin*, p. 515.

4. Barani, *Tarikh*, p. 495.

but the names of rulers who had not received *manshūrs* were dropped from the sermons.<sup>1</sup>

Conscious of his religious obligations and anxious to pronounce his role as a ruler of the Musalmans, the Sultan called himself *محيى سنن خاتم النبيين*<sup>2</sup> (reviver of the traditions of the last of the Prophets), forced people to offer the obligatory prayers in congregation,<sup>3</sup> enforced total prohibition in Delhi<sup>4</sup> and laid such emphasis on following the religious injunctions that people began to commit religious formula to memory<sup>5</sup> even while walking on the streets.

The Sultan demanded the cooperation of the religious groups in the implementation of his policies guided by his conviction that 'State and religion are twins.'<sup>6</sup> The 'ulama who had been pushed to the background by 'Alāuddin Khalji must have welcomed this change in the government's attitude, but to the mystics, particularly of the Chishti *silsilah*, it was an interference in their *khānqah* life and amounted to a flagrant disregard of their concept of *walayat*. Ghiyāthuddin Tughluq had shown greater inclination towards the 'ulama than the *sufis* but Muhammad bin Tughluq strove to bind them both to the state chariot. He went to the extent of deciding questions of inheritance and succession in the Suhrawardi *khānqah* of Multan,<sup>7</sup>

1. Barani, *Tarikh*, p. 493.

Firuz Shah reintroduced their names in *Khutba* (*Futuhāt*, Aligarh ed., p. 5) on the ground that they had rendered great services to the cause of Islam.

2. *Chronicles of the Pathan Kings of Delhi*, pp. 211-215.

3. *Rihla*, II, p. 52.

4. *Masalik ul-Absar*, English tr. Otto Spies, p. 52.

5. *Rihla*, II, p. 52.

6. *Siyar ul-Auliya*, p. 196.

It is interesting to note that his contemporary Ilkhanid Sultan, Abu Sa'id, also had similar ideas. He wrote to him in a letter :

موجب الدين و الملك توأمان همیشه دولت را بلوازم دين و  
دين سبب دوام دولت شناخته

*Bayad-i Tajuddin Wazir*, Danishgah-i Isfahan, p. 410.

7. *Rihla*, II, pp. 61, 56.

which he had virtually converted into a state department.<sup>1</sup> The Chishti contention that the paths of religion and government being different they were justified is not accepting government jobs, was rejected on the ground that during the time of the Orthodox Caliphs offices of government were invariably assigned to men of religion and learning.<sup>2</sup> Though the Sultan had, at one time, joined the spiritual discipline of Shaikh 'Alāuddin of Ajodhan<sup>3</sup> and had also given one of his daughters in marriage to a grandson of Shaikh Hamiduddin Sufi of Nagaur,<sup>4</sup> under the influence of Ibn Taimiya's teachings, he objected to mystic dress and demeanour.<sup>5</sup>

(2) But the Sultan was also conscious of the fact that his efforts to look after and give a direction to Muslim religious attitudes alone could hardly help him in consolidating an all-India Empire. A Muslim ruler of an on-Muslim population had to think and act differently also.

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1. *Rihla*, II, p. 9.
  2. *Rihla*, II, p. 54; see also *Khair ul-Majalis* (Introduction), p. 55.
  3. *Siyar ul-Auliya*, p. 196.
  4. See *Medieval India—A Miscellany*, Vol. I, Nizami, Some Documents of Muhammad bin Tughluq, p. 307. The Sultan gave another daughter in marriage to Maulana Yusuf, *Tarikh-i Mubarak Shahi*, p. 98. He gave his sisters also in marriage to religious men. *Rihla*, II, p. 49.
  5. *Siyar ul-Auliya*, p. 273. The Sultan must have developed some serious misapprehensions about the nature and objectives of the mystic movement. In response to his request, Shaikh Sharafuddin Yahya Muneri wrote two volumes on mysticism. It appears that perhaps he was not fully satisfied with this work and when he requested for more, the Shaikh wrote back to him; "As much of it as could be given the shape of words, I have already written and you have acknowledged receipt of two volumes. But who in this world has ever written that part which words cannot contain, and how can I attempt it? The only answer that I can give to you is that he who has not been promoted in the way of Path would not know the Reality and he who is deprived of the real mystical norm will never know anything. Nothing further". It is significant that in this letter the saint has addressed the Sultan as "dear brother." *Maktabat-i Sharafuddin Ahmad Muneri*, MS. No. 1294 Khuda Bakhsh Library, f. 216a-b. For English translation of this letter, Mahdi Husain Tughluq Dynasty, pp. 622-24.

The Sultan was anxious to introduce measures for the political unification of India by integrating the south with the north and by completing his control of the frontier areas.<sup>1</sup> This necessitated the creation of a second administrative centre at Daulatabad<sup>2</sup> and greater involvement of the Hindus in the functioning of the government. He realized that only by providing a broad base for the State could he implement his schemes of expansion and consolidation.<sup>3</sup> If the State could not be coterminous with the population of the country and develop into an Indian State, cohesion and stability of the political system was a far cry. He therefore threw offices open to talent and appointed Hindus, like Ratan<sup>4</sup> (governor of Shewan, Siwistan), Manak Sultani<sup>5</sup> (*muqti* of Ajmer) Kishan Bazran Indri<sup>6</sup> (*muqti* of Awadh), Dhara<sup>7</sup> (naib wazir of Deogir) and others to important posts. This policy brought about a change in the composition of the governing class and met with stiff resistance from the Muslim nobility. Barani contemptuously refers to the officers sent to Daulatabad after the recall of Qutlugh Khan as belonging to the families of vintners, singers, barbers, weavers, gardeners, cooks, etc.,<sup>8</sup> but his real resentment was against the admission of non-Muslims to positions of authority. Isāmi<sup>9</sup> echoes the same sentiments

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1. His letter to Abu Sa'id shows his concern in the matter. See *Bayad-Tajuddin Wazir*, pp. 406-7.
  2. *Masalik ul-Absar* (Eng.), p. 18. Hamd ullah Mustaufij writes: "Its greatest city is Delhi.....capital of the Sultan. A city of almost equal size is Duwirgir (Dawlatabad)". *Nuzhat*, p. 255. For a detailed discussion of the circumstances in which this Deccan experiment was made, see Nizami in *Comprehensive History of India*, Vol. V, pp. 506-515.
  3. Barani says: "the idolaters and *mushriks*, called *kharajis* and *dhim-mis*, were given rich dresses, fine horses and flags and were raised to high offices of the State". *Fatāwā-i Jahandari* (Eng. tr.), pp. 46-47.
  4. *Rihla*, II, p. 5.
  5. *Epigraphia Indica* (Suppl.) 1967, p. 12.
  6. Barani, p. 505.
  7. Barani, *Tarikh*, p. 501.
  8. Barani, p. 505.
  9. *Futuh us-Salatin*, p. 606. Sayyid Muhammad Gisu Daraz of  
(Contd. on next page)

when he remarks that the entire country had come under Hindu domination :

شده ضبط هندو سراسر دیار  
مسلمان چو هندو خزان در حصار

To strengthen this process of widening the base of the State, Muhammad bin Tughluq established contacts with Hindu religious thinkers,<sup>1</sup> made gifts of one thousand cows to their centres, visited their temples, issued a *farman* for the construction of a new *basti upasthaya* (rest house for monks) and a *gow-math*<sup>2</sup> (cow temple), celebrated Hindu festivals,<sup>3</sup> established in Awadha a colony known as *Saragdwari*,<sup>4</sup> created Hindu rule in Jawhar (near Thana in Bombay) and Karauli<sup>5</sup> (east of Rajasthan).

To satisfy his own intellectual curiosity and to break rigid thinking of the '*ulama*, he arranged philosophic and religious discussions and spent his leisure hours in these assemblies.<sup>6</sup> The emergence of a number of heterodox religious groups and

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Gulbarga once observed that the Sultan thought like this :

همه هندو و غلامان که ایشان هم در معنی هندو اند گر دآرم  
تا هر چه بر ایشان بگویم ابا نیارند

*Jawāmai' ul-Kalim*, p. 176). "I should collect round me all Hindus and slaves ('who also are in reality Hindus') so that they do not express there revulsion at whatever I order them" (parenthesis contains the saint's own assessment of the nature of slaves).

1. *Futuh us-Salatin*, p. 515; *Rihla*, II, p. 199.

2. See *Copreensive History of India*, Vol. V, pp. 494-95.

3. *Futuh us-Salatin*, p. 515.

4. Barani, p. 485; Isāmi, p. 472.

5. *Imperial Gazetteer*, XIV, p. 88; *Gazetteer of Karauli*, p. 26, as cited in *Tughluq Dynasty*, pp. 112-13.

6. Barani, *Tarikh*, p. 465. *Masalik*, p. 38; *Comprehensive History of India*, V, p. 494.

individuals, whom Firuz Shah later punished,<sup>1</sup> was a necessary concomitant of the atmosphere created by his philosophic interests and pursuits.

(3) But the Sultan was not prepared to confine his policies to the Indian situation only. The contemporary political scene of Central Asia and Persia articulated the spirit of higher imperialism in him.<sup>2</sup> The power of the Ilkhanids had declined and Timur had not yet been born. Could he not fill in the vacuum in the political life of Central Asia? His political vision extended far beyond India and embraced countries up to Egypt on one side and China and Khurasan on the other. Embassies came to his court from Iraq, China, Khwarazm, Syria and Iran.<sup>3</sup> He sent crores of *tankas* to be distributed in the sacred towns of Iraq and in Ghazni,<sup>4</sup> remitted many taxes on imports<sup>5</sup> and patronized foreign scholars.<sup>6</sup> People gathered at his court from Khurasan, Iraq, Mawara-un-Nahr, Khwarazm, Sistan, Herat, Egypt and Damascus.<sup>7</sup> Barani says that in the later years of his reign, many distinguished Mongols and (Mongol) ladies—the great men of Mughalistan, including Mongol *amirs* of *tumans* and *hazaras*—used to come every year to offer their allegiance, service, sincerity and loyalty. Some of them remained in his service, others went back. They got lacs and crores (of *tankas*), golden ornaments set with precious stones, diamonds, golden and silver vessels, basins full of gold and silver tankas, pearls weighed out by *mans*, cloth of gold brocade or woven with gold thread, waist bands of gold brocade and caparisoned horses. *Iqtās* and *wilayats* (territories) were given to them

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1. *Futuhāt-i Firuz Shahi*, Aligarh ed. pp. 7–11.

2. Barani says that his ambition could not be satisfied even if the whole fourth of the inhabited globe (*rabi' maskun*) was brought under his control. He wanted to stalk in the world like Kaimurs and Faridun and to behave towards people like Jamshed and Kai-khusrau. *Tarikh*, pp. 458–59.

3. Nizami, *Studies in Medieval Indian History and Culture*, p. 5.

4. *Masalik ul-Absar*, p. 40; Barani, p. 461.

5. *Rihla*, II, p. 53.

6. Nizami, *Salatin-i Dehli kay madhhabī ruhānat*, pp. 352–3.

7. Barani, p. 462.

in *inam*.<sup>1</sup> Hamdullah Mustawfi, writing in 1340, noted: "But recently Sultan Muhammad Shah of Delhi has abolished the rule, and in place of hoarding treasure, has been spending all the gold he possessed, and consequently no one now thinks of bringing gold into India from these islands; but rather would carry away gold and treasure thence to Iran, for it is now the most profitable commodity on export from India."<sup>2</sup> In the planning of the city of Daulatabad with self-sufficient units<sup>3</sup> the Sultan was perhaps influenced by the Arab practice in Syria.<sup>4</sup> The token currency<sup>5</sup> had its precedent in China and Persia. The Khurasan project and the Qarachil expedition were planned in the broader framework of developments in the eastern world. In a very interesting letter to Abu Sa'id, Muhammad bin Tughluq seeks his cooperation in dealing with certain hostile powers in Khurasan, Sind and the coastal areas of India, because they had made the movement of pilgrims for Haj and the merchants difficult.<sup>6</sup> The character and composition of the army also underwent a change in the process of planning these campaigns. The army recruited for the Khurasan expedition comprised, besides Rajputs, a large number of foreigners. Amir Nauroz, the son-in-law of Tarmashirin, came from Transoxiana with his troops, while other Mongol and Afghan leaders, like Ismā'il Afghan, Gul Afghani, Shahu Afghan and Hulajun Khan came to India to join this army.<sup>7</sup> Shihabuddin al-'Umari informs us that the Sultan's army consisted of Turks, Khitais, Persians and Indians.<sup>8</sup> An army drawn from so many countries was a new

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1. *Tarikh*, p. 462.

2. *Nuzhat al-Qulub*, Tr. Le Strange, p. 222.

3. *Masalik ul-Absar*, p. 18.

4. See Barthold, *Musulman Culture*, as cited by O. Spies, *Masalik*, p. 19 fn 30.

5. For Chao, the Chinese paper currency, see Barthold Spuler, *History of the Mongols*, translated from German by Helga and Stuart Drummond, University of California Press, 1972, pp. 139-141.

6. *Bayād-i Tajuddin Wazir*, *Danishgah-i Isfahan*, p. 407.

7. Barani, *Tarikh*, p. 533.

8. *Masalik*, p. 26.

experiment in the military history of the Delhi Sultanate.<sup>1</sup> According to Ibn Baṭṭuta, the Sultan used to send one Sayyid Abul Hasan 'Ibadi to Iraq and Khurasan to make purchases of weapons, besides other things.<sup>2</sup>

Thus driven by his dynamic spirit, Muhammad bin Tughluq made the first serious effort to resolve the contradictions arising out of the static attitude of the Muslim religious classes which refused to be influenced by any spirit of *ijtihād*, and the realities of the Indian situation which demanded bold measures to widen the base of the government in the interest of its stability and in pursuance of its expansionist policies. He strove to realize two objectives: to bridge the gulf between the requirements of religion and State so far as the Muslims were concerned and to bridge the gulf between the State and the non-Muslims so far as the Hindus were concerned. It was an effort fraught with almost revolutionary possibilities. The 'ulama who had earlier during the reign of Ghiyathuddin Tughluq refused to consider a simple problem like *sama'* (mystic music) afresh in the light of the basic sources of Islamic law and had insisted on a verdict of Iman Abu Hanifa<sup>3</sup> to resolve the controversy, could hardly accept his approach which they dubbed as *tahkimat-i mujaddid* and *awamir al muk-tara'*<sup>4</sup> and started maligning him. The *ashāb-i din* rose against him; the Muslim chiefs of Sehwan resented the appointment of Hindu governor; Adil Shah killed Bhiran as he did not like to work as subordinate to a Hindu; the 'ulama resented the patronage given to foreign scholars: the mystics opposed

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1. Though from the very beginning soldiers in the armies of the Delhi Sultanate belonged to different regions and races (*Tarikh-i Fakhruddin Mubarak Shah*, p. 33) and when Ghazī Malik opposed Khusrāu Khan his army comprised Ghuzz, Mongol, Russian, Tajik, Khurasani and other soldiers (*Tughluq Namah*, p. 84), the position of the army recruited by Muhammad bin Tughluq was different, as it consisted of contingents supplied by different countries and was organized with the object of being deployed in foreign lands.

2. *Rihla*, p. 131.

3. *Siyar I-Auliya*, pp. 531-32; *Siyar ul-'Ārifin*, p. 89.

4. Barani, *Tarikh*, pp. 470-71.



his policy of forcing them to accept government jobs; the rural classes looked askance at his agrarian measures. The Sultan had hoped that cooperation of the Indo-Muslim religious classes and the nobility reorganized on a broad Indian pattern, would help in carrying through his extra-Indian schemes. But failure of the Khurasan and the Qarachil expeditions upset his calculations completely and he was forced to concentrate all his energies on the Indian situation. His revolutionary ideas and policies excited an endless chain of rebellions which kept him running from one part of the country to another and he sadly confessed: "My country has become diseased."<sup>1</sup> It was not merely the frustration of a despot but the failure of an idealist to resolve the complexities of the Indian situation in a fundamental way.

Firuz Shah was aware of the sources of his predecessor's troubles. He lacked the courage and the vision needed to push his predecessor's policies to their logical conclusion. Security lay in effecting a retreat. He started his reign by obtaining letters of forgiveness from those who had suffered during Muhammad bin Tughluq's reign<sup>2</sup> and reversed his policy towards the *'ulama*, the mystics, and the nobility. He encouraged the study of *fiqh* to counter the earlier move at developing the spirit of free inquiry and *ijtihad*. Determined to placate orthodox public opinion he consulted the *ulama* on imposition and remission of taxes. If the *Fiqh-i-Firuz Shahi*, compiled under the orders of the Sultan, can be taken to represent the viewpoint of the ruler, it must be accepted that in the matter of civil rights the Firuzi government was not inclined to make any discrimination between a Muslim and a non-Muslim (*dhimmi*). Demolition of ancient temples was considered illegal; a non-Muslim could not be forced to pay *kharaj* on residential houses; he became owner of waste land which he brought under cultivation; a non-Muslim creditor had the same rights in enforcing his claims on a Muslim debtor as a Muslim creditor;

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1. Barani, *Tarikh*, pp. 521.

2. *Futuhāt*, p. 19.

if a Muslim committed the murder of a non-Muslim he had to pay the same compensation money (*diyat*) which he was expected to pay to a Muslim; if a non-Muslim transformed land adjoining his house into a garden, he had to pay, like Muslims '*ushr*' and not *kharaj*. These were accepted principles of *fiqh* which had perhaps come down from earlier regimes and Firuz Shah did not interfere with them. But by imposing the *jiziya* on the Brahmans, he negated completely the spirit of his predecessor's policy.<sup>1</sup> His *Futuhāt* was, in fact, a manifesto inscribed on the walls of the Jamā' Masjid of Delhi to announce his commitment to traditional religious thinking and his determination to root out every deviation whether in the field of religion or of politics. Nawahun<sup>2</sup> and Ahmad Bihari<sup>3</sup> were not individuals who were executed: these were movements which were suppressed. Expansionism could not go hand in hand with this policy and had to be abandoned in favour of pacifism and retreat.

Muhammad bin Tughluq had to face a number of rebellions organized by his Muslim officers, but there was no insurrection of the Hindu officers in his service. While the Sultan's co-religionists condemned him as a second Yazid,<sup>4</sup> his Hindu contemporaries referred to him as 'the mighty lord'<sup>5</sup> and included him among saints.<sup>6</sup> The broad base that Muhammad bin Tughluq had given to the State kept him on the throne

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1. See *Insha-i Mahru*, p. 48 for Shaikh Radiuddin's protest to 'Ainul Mulk Mahru for reimposition of taxes earlier abolished by Muhammad bin Tughluq. Referring to the Hindus he says :

بر ایشان جزیه دراز بار می کنند ، دیگر قسمت چگونه  
طاقت آرند

2. *Siyar ul-Arifin*, p. 160.

3. *Futuhāt-i Firuz Shahi*, p. 8. For Shaikh Sarafuddin Yahya Muneri's criticism of his execution, see *Manaqib ul-Asfiya*.

4. 'Isami, p. 606.

5. *Tughluq Dynasty*, p. 327.

6. Nuniz as quoted in *A Forgotten Empire*, p. 8.

despite the rebellions that raised their head like dragon's teeth in every direction; Firuz Shah's change of policy led to his abdication and loss of territories to the Sultanate. But if on one side Firuz Shah's policies had the effect of narrowing down the base of the State, his attitude towards mystics and their *khānqahs* neutralized the effects of Ibn Taimiya's ideology and paved the way for the counter ideology of Ibn 'Arabi to flourish. It was a paradoxical situation, but during the centuries that followed, Ibn 'Arabi's thought held the ground and received a temporary set-back when Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi Mujaddid-i Alf-i-Thāni challenged it on the basis of his mystic experience. As a working idea in social life *wahdal-ul-wujud* (pantheism—the corner stone of Ibn 'Arabi's mystical thought) meant liquidation of barriers between man and man and the development of an attitude which treated all men as 'children of God on earth.' In the centuries that followed it found a powerful expression in the teachings of many eminent Indian saints. Shah Muhibbullah of Allahabad (ob./648), who was known as Ibn 'Arabi Thani (the second Ibn 'Arabi) on account of his deep insight into the works of the great mystic, declared in no unequivocal terms :

“Justice requires that the thought of the welfare of men should be uppermost in the minds of the rulers, so that the people might be protected from the tyranny of officials. It does not matter if one is a believer or a non-believer. All human beings are the creatures of God.’ If one has such a feeling, he will not differentiate between a believer and a non-believer and will show

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1. Three distinguished scholars of the period, Sayyid Ali Hamadani, Abul Mahasin Sharafuddin, and Shaikh Ali Piru Maha'imi, wrote commentaries on the *Fusus ul-Hikam* of Ibn 'Arabi. A number of scholars and poets, e.g., Syed Amir Mah of Bahraich, Mas'ud Bak, Shaikh Sharafuddin Yahya Muneri, made *wahdat ul-wujud* (pantheism) their favourite theme. Of these scholars, Mas'ud Bak was executed by Firuz Shah; Shaikh Sharafuddin Yahya Muneri escaped punishment perhaps through the intervention of Syed Jalaluddin Bukhari. *Mir'at ul-Asrar*, MS. personal collection, p. 697. For details see *Salatin-i Dehli kay madhhai rujhanat*, pp. 412-414.

sympathy and consideration towards both. It is in the Qur'ān and the *Futuhāt* has elucidated it that the Prophet was sent as a mercy unto all mankind".<sup>1</sup>

This approach was fully in keeping with Muhammad bin Tughluq's attitude and policies, but working under the impact of Ibn Taimiya's movement for reform and regeneration of Muslim society, he could not derive any ideological strength from the teachings of Ibn 'Arabi. Firuz Shah's religious thinking was influenced neither by Ibn Taimiya nor by Ibn 'Arabi. His was a rigid juristics approach which had hardly any scope for *ijtihad* under new conditions.

From what has been briefly stated above the attitude and policies of the Sultans during the fourteenth century, the essence of Muslim political thought may be thus presented :

'Alāuddin Khalji pursued his policies as political expediency demanded. The day he gave up the idea of founding a new religion, he also decided not to meddle in religion. Muhammad bin Tughluq attempted to remove the gulf between the obligations of a ruler towards his co-religionists and the vast mass of non-Muslim population by weaving the two obligations into a pattern. He failed. Firuz Shah's reign registered a reaction : exclusive emphasis on his obligations as a Muslim king and disregard of the Indian situation.

The failure of Muhammad bin Tughluq's efforts to bring religious law in harmony with the Indian situation and the failure of Firuz Shah to solve the problems of the Indian situation through application of traditional religious law gave birth to the view (as expressed by Barani in his *Fatāwa*) that the political structure of the Sultanate could not be sustained through *Shari'at* laws. Barani was bold enough to declare that State-laws (*dawābit*) could not be framed in consonance with the *Shari'at* but he could not muster up enough courage to say that a new '*ilm-i Kālam* and a new spirit of *ijtihad* was

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1. *Maktubat-i Shah Muhibbullah*, MS. Muslim University Library, pp. 133-134.

called for to remove these contradictions. But in saying so he would have endorsed the thought and actions of Muhammad bin Tughluq—something which changed circumstances did not permit.

Both personal religious leanings and the exigencies of the political situation determined the attitude of the rulers towards the institution of *khilāfat* and the need for caliphal recognition of authority. The fact that even after the fall of the Abbasid Caliphate the Sultans continued to call themselves 'lieutenants of the Caliph' shows that the institution had a place in the religious consciousness of the Muslims. But it was more a fiction than a reality. Mubarak Khalji declared himself as the *khalifa*; Muhammad bin Tughluq showed excessive attachment to the *khalifa* both out of conviction and as a political expedient; Firuz called himself *Khalifa-i Khalifatu'llah* and waived his claims over the Deccan on the ground that the *khalifa* had recommended it. But if the moral prestige of the *khalifa* was so great that Muhammad bin Tughluq could use it for silencing opposition to his authority, one can legitimately ask: how was it that there was no public objection to Mubarak's claim to *khilafat*?<sup>1</sup>

If religion could not be made the guiding principle in matters of administration, what were the religious obligations of a Sultan in his personal life? Barani was prepared to condone religious lapses in a Sultan's behaviour provided "he protected and promoted the Muslim religion". This protection of the faith was linked up in his mind with enforcement of

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1. Except an involved verse of Khusrau in which he says :

مگر گفت بغداد باہر کہ باید  
کہ دار الخلافہ بدہلی نشاید

(*Nuh Sipihr*, p. 143) no reaction of public or 'ulama is registered to this claim of Mubarak.

religious obligations like prayers, fasts, *ṣakat*, *haj*—and the institution of *iḥtisāb* which covered stern measures against tavern-keepers, prostitutes, *tarabads*, etc. and the teaching of philosophy. He considered a 'king's falling into sinfulness irrelevant to the functioning of the government.' But Barani was not supported by the medieval public opinion in these views. No doubt *iḥtisāb* was looked upon as an important function of the State and a distinguished fourteenth century 'ālim, Diauddin Sunnami, had explained its basic principles in his *Nisab-ul Iḥtisāb* and the duties of the government in that regard, it was generally believed that the personal religious life of a Sultan could not fail to influence the life of the people.<sup>1</sup> A ruler himself sunk in wine and venery could not be expected to create an atmosphere conducive to the moral well-being of society. Though 'Alāuddin did not offer prayers regularly, his machinery of *iḥtisab* functioned successfully because he himself set an example of total abstinence and morality in private life. Mubarak did not abrogate 'Alāuddin's prohibitory measures<sup>2</sup> but his example determined the behaviour of the nobles and the people. Khusrau told the Sultan: "A king should not be drunk, nor should he pursue the path of pleasure. He is the guardian of the people and if a herdsman is drunk, his herd finds a place in the stomach of the wolf".<sup>3</sup>

Dispension of justice was considered to be the very *raison d'être* for the existence of the institution of kingship.<sup>4</sup> King-

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1. **الناس على دين ملوكهم** (People follow the religion (the ways) of their rulers) was the general belief of medieval society. Barani, *Tarikh*, p. p. 130; *Al-Fakri*, Eng. tr. p. 23; *Maktubat-i Shaikh Abdul Quddus Gangohi*, p. 9, etc.

2. Barani, *Tarikh*, p. 384.

3. *Nuh Sipihr*, p. 235.

4. Khusrau says :

گرچه در آخر زمان پرورش دین کم است

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ship can co-exist with infidelity but not with injustice", remarks Barani. Muhammad bin Tughluq was keen on being called 'ādil (the just one)—as was his contemporary Ilkhanid Sultan Abu Sa'īd—and had given the name of 'Adilabad to his fortress in Delhi. When he found anybody questioning his quality of 'ādil, he flew into rage.<sup>1</sup> His coins had the inscription: "If there was no Sultan, people would devour each other".<sup>2</sup> In cases between one individual and another the government administered even-handed justice, but in matters between the State and the individual, political expediency rather than principles of justice inspired their decisions. But if Ibn Baṭṭūṭa's report that the Sultan had appeared in the court of a qādi when a complaint was made against him by a Hindu noble<sup>3</sup> is correct, Muhammad bin Tughluq's anxiety to establish the highest standards of justice cannot be denied. Nothing could demonstrate better to his Hindu subjects their equality and security in the eyes of the law. However, in dealing with a rebel, a Sultan's wrath rarely knew any moral or religious restraints.

People blamed a Sultan for scarcity, famine and starvation. "If an old woman went to sleep without food, the Sultan would be questioned on the Day of judgement"<sup>4</sup>—was the

عدل خلیفہ بس است از پی دین پروری

*Nuh Sipihr*, p. 268.

*Sirat-i Firuz Shani*, Bankipur MS. f. 16b-17a. See *Dhakhirat-ul Muluk* (pp. 91-94) for a number of the traditions of the Prophet regarding the duty of a ruler to dispense justice and protect people from tyranny.

1. *Rihla*, II, p. 55.
2. Thomas, pp. 249-250; N. Wright, p. 143.
3. *Rihla*, II, p. 52.
4. *Siyar ul-Auliya*. Khusrau tells the Sultan :

آن عمل آرند که در دیه و شهر

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popular belief. The object of state laws was considered to be creation of such conditions that nobody died of starvation.<sup>1</sup> Measures against regrating and hoarding therefore met with public approbation. 'Alāuddin's regulations about state-monopoly and *ihṭikar* (hoarding), despite their harshness, were generally appreciated by the people and even foreigners like Shamsuddin Turk and Rashiduddin Fadlullah praised the prosperity of his reign. During the time of Firuz Shah, the 'ulama, obviously under the pressure of vested interests, criticised even limited state involvement in the control and supply of goods.<sup>2</sup> The two fourteenth century *malfuzat*—*Surur us-Sudur* and *Siraj ul-Hidāya* representing the Chishti and the Suhrawardi mystic traditions, are unanimous in condemning *ihṭikar* (hoarding) and the *muḥtakir* (hoarder).

Muhammad bin Tughluq took upon himself the responsibility of supplying ration to the people when conditions became hard for them.<sup>3</sup> When Ibn Khaldun came to know about distribution of foodgrains in Delhi for six months, this

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منعم و مفلس شود آسوده بهر

*Nuh Sipihr*, p. 242.

See also Barani, *Tarikh*, p. 147.

1. Barani, *Tarikh*, p. 147.

Khusrau says that the *raison d'être* for kingship is nothing except

جهان پروری *Nuh Sipihr*, p. 238.

When 'Alāuddin Khalji heard that two or three old men, affected by draught and famine, had died in a stampede in the corn market, he was so deeply touched that he gave up drinking wine and wept saying :

ندانم چه گویم به فردا جواب

(I do not know what can be my defence for all this on the Day of Judgement).

*Futuh us-Salatin*, p. 314.

2. *Insha-i Mahru*, Lahore, pp. 68-73.

Airul Mulk explains to Maulana Shamsuddin Mutawakkil the circumstances in which measures had to be enforced by the State.

3. *Rihla* II, p. 53.



appeared so unusual to him that he put no credence on the statement of Ibn Baṭṭuta.<sup>1</sup>

During this famine the Sultan ordered the digging of wells outside the capital and provided the people with seeds and money for cultivation. This was a sort of experiment in *State-farming*. It appears that he Sultan did not succeed in it and resorted to the other alternative of *contract-cultivation*. He formulated regulations (*asalib*), created a separate department *diwan-i amir kohi*, divided the country into agricultural units (*datras*), advanced loans and directed the peasants about the crops to be sown. But this was not appreciated by the cultivators and, as Barani puts it: "The money they got seemed to them the price of their blood."<sup>2</sup> Such experiments, whatever the justification for them, were deemed to be an undue interference in the cultivator's freedom and adversely affected the interests of the intermediaries also. Firuz realized that in dealing with the agrarian problems the State should not interfere with the peasant's freedom to sow and reap his harvests. He provided irrigation facilities by construction of canals and charged a *haqq-i-sharb* with the concurrence of the 'ulama.

A strong government could control any aspect of individual or community life, could regulate supply and demand of essential commodities, impose market control, restrict free social intercourse, but interference in religious life was resented. The freedom of the Hindus to bow before their idols and blow their conches in the imperial city of Delhi<sup>3</sup> was never interfered with, though an orthodox section of the 'ulama, in utter disregard of the decision taken by the Arabs of Sind to give full religious freedom to the Hindus, pleaded for stopping these practices. 'Alāuddin could enforce all his measures curtailing freedom of the people without any fear of

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1. *The Muqaddimah* (tr. Rosenthal), I, p. 370.  
2. *Tarikh*, p. 499.  
3. Barani, pp. 216-17.

opposition, but when he thought of interfering in religious life, 'Alā-ul Mulk warned him against mass resentment that was bound to follow such measures. "Prophets have been kings but no king has been a Prophet,"<sup>1</sup> he told the Sultan.

At a time when rapid religious<sup>2</sup> change was taking place in the Ilkhanid lands and the conversion of Ghazan Khan to Islam in 1295 had accelerated the process of this change and Ghazan Khan had told his Buddhist subjects: "Let those among you who wish it, return to India, to Kashmir or Tibet,"<sup>3</sup> the attitude of the Delhi Sultans towards the problem may be read in Jalaluddin Khalji's interest in Alghu's conversion to Islam and the Sultan's readiness to give his daughter in marriage to him.<sup>4</sup> He established their colonies at Ghiyathpur, Indrapat and Kilugarhi which became known as Mughalpura. But 'Alāuddin found them an incongruous and rebellious entity and got rid of them through mass massacres.<sup>5</sup>

The Sultans realized that without identity with the Indian situation and participation of the Hindus in the administration of the country no stable political structure could be built up. The process of Indianization—which meant a broad base for the State—was, however, beset with certain inherent complexities. While it paved the way for expansion of the Empire, it weakened the main core of the governing class by destroying its homogeneity and compactness. And alternatively, if the core was strengthened, the Empire shrank in its dimensions.

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1. *Tarikh*, p. 265. Toynbee considered 'Alā ul-Mulk's comments as 'the last word on this vain dream of autocrats.' He quotes Talleyrand's following remarks on Director Larevelliere-Lepaux's religious proposals: "For my part I have only one observation to make. Jesus Christ in order to found His religion, was crucified and rose again. You should have tried to do something of the kind," and then comments: "In this monumental gibe at the expense of the fatuous Theophilanthropist, Talleyrand merely repeated in gross terms the advice of the councillor of Ala-ud-Din." *A Study of History*, Abridged Edition, pp. 493-94.
  2. *Jami' al Tawarikh*, ed. Alizade pp. 396-7.
  3. Barani, *Tarikh*, p. 219.
  4. Barani, *Tarikh*, pp. 335-336.

A situation in which the two could be made complementary to each other was not forthcoming. It needed on one side inculcation of a sense of identity with the political system in the non-Muslim population so as to ensure the loyalty of the non-Muslim ruling class to the ruling dynasty, and on the other, development of an attitude of religious tolerance in Muslim religious classes and acceptance of the non-Muslim governing class by the Muslim nobility as partners in a common venture. One depended on the other and unless the rulers succeeded in creating a proper atmosphere there was no possibility of giving a broad base to the State and simultaneously keeping the governing class compact and loyal. Vested interests—religious, political and economic—stood in the way and frustrated the efforts. Barani represents in his *Fatāwa* the view-point of those vested interests which failed to realize the needs of the Indian situation. His commitment to these interests was too deep to make him realize that without extensive Hindu participation government could not be run in India. To give a philosophic veneer to his apparently unjustifiable and unreal approach, Barani made a distinction between the 'high born' and the 'low born' and propounded his 'doctrine of contradictions' to uphold his theories. 'Alāuddin had taken the first step in that direction, Muhammad bin Tughluq adopted it as the guiding principle of his administrative policy. Besides other measures referred to before, his organization of *amirān-i sadah*, in which large number of Hindus were involved as *chaudhris*, *mutasarrifs*, *patwaris*, *sarhangs*, *balahar*, *khut*, etc. was also an attempt in the same direction. Whatever the nature of opposition to this policy, obviously it was the broad base of his government and the loyalty of a nucleus of nobility which made it possible for him to face all revolts and keep the administration going.

The Indian 'ulama of the fourteenth century, though deeply engrossed in juristic studies, singularly lacked in the spirit of *ijtihad*. They failed to define the position of religious law with reference to the status of the Hindus and the nature of the Sultanate in Islamic polity. That a scholar of Dīa'uddin Barani's stature and eminence should go on repeating that administra-

tion could not be carried on according to the laws of *shari'at* as shows that *taqlid* had limited the vision of the contemporary 'ulama, who were not prepared to think afresh the basic problems of religion and politics. They compiled a number of books on *fiqh*<sup>1</sup> which may be considered monuments of their industry, but not of their dynamism and realistic appraisal of the situation. Their thought rotated within the framework of earlier classical literature on *fiqh* which needed fresh interpretation in the light of the exigencies of the Indian situation. They wanted verdicts of Imam Abu Hanifa and not a recourse to Qur'ān or Sunnah for fresh formulation of the religious law to answer the needs of the time. The sufis displayed greater dynamism and awareness of the Indian situation and sought to bridge the gulf between the Muslims and the non-Muslims by throwing their *khanqahs* open to all sorts of people—Hindus and Muslims—and by propounding a revolutionary concept of religion which identified it with the service of mankind.<sup>2</sup> The rulers however could not take advantage of this atmosphere created by the sufis.

The imperial slave-household had been an important prop of the political power of the Ilbarites. Later the situation changed. Firuz attempted to recruit a large number of slaves but the institution had, by that time, outlived its utility. Recruitment of slaves from India only limited the effectiveness of the institution and made the slaves amenable to local pressures and influences. Barani was constrained to remark that there were definite disadvantages "in collecting slaves and

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1. e. g. *Fatāwa-i Tatar Khaniyah*, *Fatāwa-i Firuz Shahi*, *Fawa'id-i Firuz Shahi*. For details, Nizami, *Salatin-i Dehli kay madhhab-i rujhanāt*, pp. 396-398.
  2. Defining the highest form of devotion to God, Shaikh Mu'inuddin Chishti remarked that it was nothing but "to redress the misery of those in distress; to fulfil the needs of the helpless and to feed the hungry." He therefore advised his disciples to develop 'river-like generosity, sun-like affection and earth-like hospitality' (*Siyar ul Auliya*, p. 46.) This mystic morality saved human sympathy from running into narrow grooves and struck at the very root of parochialism, casteism and religious exclusiveness. See also, *Religion and Politics in India during the Thirteenth Century*, pp. 184-185.

keeping them together." He summed up the position in these words: "Slave revolt is a great menace and causes anxiety and dread. Also it is a long time since wise men have framed the proverb: it is difficult to put out a household fire."<sup>1</sup> And Barani was not wrong, for in the years that followed the slaves played a very destructive role.

But there was one more factor which encouraged slaves and other officers to fish in the troubled waters and try to carve out independent principalities. Muslim political thought during the fourteenth century had rejected the earlier view that members of any particular dynasty had the exclusive right to rule. "We loyally obey whoever occupies the throne"<sup>2</sup> became the general attitude—an attitude which Babur criticised as ruinous to the stability of the State. This attitude paved the way for rebellions, abdications and led to erosion of political authority. Any political adventurer with the necessary military strength or local support could try his luck, so much so that even a mystic family succeeded in establishing its government in Multan.<sup>3</sup>

The attitude of the common man towards any change of government seems to have been one of indifference so long as it did not directly affect him. If a Sultan ensured cheap bread and peaceful conditions they attributed supernatural powers to him. People went to the grave of 'Alāuddin Khalji and tied threads there for the fulfilment of their desires.<sup>4</sup> The Chishti

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1. *Fatawa*, tr. p. 26.

2. Babur was astonished at this theory of the Bengalis. *Memoirs*, pp. 482-83.

3. See *Taqabat-i Akbari*, III, p. 52. See also *Medieval India Quarterly* Vol. III, 1957 article on "The Suhrawardi Silsilah and its influence on medieval Indian politics," pp. 135-136.

4. *Khair-ul-Majalis*, p. 241.

Khusrau prayed during the time of Ghiyathuddin Tughluq—

(Cont. on next page)

mystics kept aloof from the state, refused to accept *jagirs*, declined invitations to visit the court and turned down offers of government posts.<sup>1</sup> The Chishti attitude towards the necessity of state is neatly epitomized in a fourteenth century *malʿuz* wherein it is said: "The qāḍī is for the wicked one. What has he got to do with the pious?"<sup>2</sup> It is rarely that a ruling monarch is mentioned in a contemporary *malʿuz*. If any dead Sultan is referred to, his wars, campaigns or political struggles are ignored. Iltutmish's construction of *Hauḍ-i Shamṣī*<sup>3</sup> which provided water to scarcity areas and 'Alāuddīn's cheapness of commodities which made it possible for every beggar to have one or two quilts,<sup>4</sup> are praised. "As you are so shall be your rulers,"<sup>5</sup> said Shaikh Nasiruddīn Chiragh, while his spiritual mentor told people that if a tyrant was placed over them, they should pray for divine mercy for their own sins.<sup>6</sup> The Suhrawardī attitude, in keeping with their

سر شاهان علماء الدین مفسور  
کہ بادا مشہدش هموارہ پر نور

*Tughluq Namah*. p 58.

1. For details, Nizami, *Early Indo-Muslim Mystics and their attitude towards the State in Islamic Culture*, Vol. XX, No. 2 to Vol. XXIV. No. 1. (1948-50).
2. *Sururus Sudur* (MS).
3. *Fawa'id-ul Fu'ad*, p. 199.
4. *Khair-ul-Majalis*, pp. 185, 240.
5. *Khair-ul-Majalis*, p. 50.
6. *Durar-i-Nizami* (MS.), 2a, b.

'Isami echoes the same feelings when he says :

چو خواہد خداوند لیل و نہار  
کہ از مرز و بومے بر آرد دمار  
و زان پس یکے ظالے را خمدائے  
کند اندران ملک فرمان روائے

(Cont. on next page)

general approach to politics, was more in favour of the Sultans. Sayyid Jalaluddin Bukhari declared that defiance of royal authority—openly or secretly—was not permitted. “On the Day of Judgement,” he told his audience, “People (who defy) would be subjected to severe punishment (عذاب سخت).

The Prophet has said ‘whoever obeys the Sultan, obeys Allah’.<sup>1</sup> Amir Khusrau, though a courtier, could not resist the urge to express his feelings against the destruction wrought by the Khalji armies in the Deccan, and he summed up in a few words his assesment of Khalji deeds, in the south: “Next you saw bones on the Earth.”<sup>2</sup> In his elegy on the death of ‘Alāuddin Khalji he thus registered his reaction to the spirit of Khalji imperialism :

چرا باید گرفت آن کشور و شهر  
 کزان ندهد بیش از چهار گز هر

(Why conquer so many realms and cities when you cannot get more than four yards of land for your grave ?)

Muhammad bin Tughluq is not referred to in the *Khair-ul Majalis*, but brief critical references to his treatment of Shaikh Nasiruddin Chiragh are found in the *Jawami'-ul Kalim* and the *Siyar-ul-Auliya*. It is significant that references to him in the *Sarūr-us-Sadūr* are complimentary, perhaps because this mystic family had the unique distinction of having matrimonial relations with the Sultan.

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*Futuh-us-Salat* p. 456. Again on p. 24.

ور از طاعتش سر بتایم ما  
 یکے ظالمے را کند پادشا

1. *Siraj ul-Hidaya* (MS.) f. 16a.
2. *Khaza' in-ul-Futuh* (Eng. Tr.) Int. XIV.

It is futile to expect from medieval writers any detailed discussion of the circumstances under which rebellion against a ruler is justified but oblique references, interspersed in diverse types of discussions, reveal their thinking on the subject. Sayyid Ali Hamadāni discusses obligations which a ruler owes to his people, and developing his theme quotes traditions of the Prophet in which outspokenness before a tyrant is considered as the highest act of religious devotion and the status of a man punished for opposing an unjust Sultan is given a higher place than that of a martyr (*shahid*).<sup>1</sup> Dīa-i Nakhshabi uses the medium of anecdotes to criticize the actions of the Sultans and in fact this was a popular practice in those days of monarchical institutions to speak their mind through stories and fables. 'Isāmi, of all the historians of the fourteenth century, was confronted with a concrete situation: to justify Bahmanid rebellion against Muhammad bin Tughluq. He, therefore, brings all sorts of charges of tyranny, irreligiousness and heresy against the Tughluq Sultan. The following verses sound like a charter of indictment and a *fatwa* of rebellion against the Sultan :

شهنشاه دون دوست و بد خواه دین  
 که یکسر سرے تافت از راه دین  
 شد آزرده از وے صغار و کبار  
 برو گشته جائز خروج دیار  
 شریعت رضا داده در خون او  
 طبیعت فردہ از افسون او  
 بہ خونش روان گشته حکم قضاء  
 قضاء بسته بروے طریق نجات  
 از آئین اسلام سر تافته

1. *Zakhirat-ul Muluk*, p. 443 et seq.



ابا زمرة كفر در بافته  
بر انداخته رسم بانگ نماز  
شب و روز از و اهل دین در گداز  
جماعت یه جمعه در انداخته  
ابا هندوان هولیے پاخته  
آبا جوگیان گشته خلوت گراے  
به دل راه کفار را داده جاے  
برو متفق مفتے کم شده  
و گر خود شده نیز ملزم شده  
نفیر از جفایش به هر کشورے  
برو حرب جائز به هر محصرے  
همان شاه خونخوار و ناپاک کیش  
شنیدم در آخر ملک ، خویش  
بسے فوج برگشتگان را شکست  
بسے صاحب چترش آمد به دست  
همی کرد ضحاک را اتباع  
هم آخر بر آئین اهل خداع

["The Emperor who is a friend of the mean and an enemy of the Faith has completely abandoned the path of Islam.

Everyone high or low is annoyed with him and a rebellion of the country against him is justified.

The *Shari'at* has decreed his bloodshed and hearts are disgusted because of his deceit.

The *qaḍis* have issued a *fatwa* to kill him: Destiny had slammed the door of Salvation against him.

He has revolted against the principles of Islam and has allied himself with the community of *kāfirs*.

He has stopped the customary call for prayers and the believers are suffering at his hands day and night.

He has given up the Friday congregational prayers and participates in Hindu festivals.

He has taken the *jogis* into confidence and has planted into his heart love for the *kāfir's* faith.

Few *muftis* see eye to eye with him and hardly anyone of them concurs with him without abasing himself.

In every province are loud cries against his tyranny; and war on him is considered lawful according to every school of thought.

Towards the close of his reign I am told that blood-thirsty king of impure faith crushed many rebel contingents and seized their banners.

He followed in the footsteps of Ḍahhāk and has ever lived like a treacherous person."

Distortion and misrepresentation could not go further and religious feelings could not be exploited in a worse manner than this. However, this is the only expression of the feelings of rebellion, sustained by reference to *fatwas*, in the history of the Delhi Sultanate. Unfortunately no text of the *fatwa* of *qaḍis* has survived to give us an idea of the way Muhammad bin Tughluq's execution was justified by the '*ulama*.

Though religious thinkers like Barani and rulers like Jalaluddin Khalji and Firuz Tughluq thought that execution of only the apostate, the murderer and the one guilty of adultery is permitted in *shari'at*, in actual practice, the rulers inflicted capital punishments for crimes against the state. Balban, 'Alāuddin Khalji and Muhammad bin Tughluq were known for their merciless executions. But while Balban and 'Alāuddin

Khalji never bothered about the laws of *shari'at* in this regard, Muhammad bin Tughluq always sought juristic sanction for his executions. Four *muftis* were all the time present at his court and whenever any accused was brought in, the Sultan placed the matter before them saying : "If any of the accused is unjustly killed, and you fail to speak the truth on his behalf, you shall be held responsible for his blood," but the Sultan mostly defeated them in argument. Yahya Sirhindi very significantly remarks :

این رعایت شرع معلوم نیست که از جهت آرام خلق  
می کرد یا سببی دیگر داشت

(Whether the motive for this consideration for the *shari'at* was to give relief to the people, or there was some other purpose behind it, is not known).

Only once was trial by ordeal mentioned at the court of Jalaluddin Khalji, but the idea was rejected as being against the *shari'at* laws. Punishment of families for crimes of individuals was a contravention of Islamic law, but 'Alāuddin Khalji resorted to it regardless of all religious restrictions.

Barring 'Alāuddin Khalji's discussion with Qaḍi Mughith and that too in a different context, there is hardly any reference to discussion of taxation policy in the light of the *shari'at* till the time of Firuz Shah. When Firuz Shah thought of imposing a tax necessitated by the expenditure incurred on providing irrigation facilities, he obtained the approval of the 'ulama. Though he claims in his *Futuhāt* that he brought the revenue administration in line with the *shari'at* laws, it is hardly credible that he could bring about such a fundamental change in the structure and machinery of taxation. It is however recorded that in remission of certain taxes he was guided by the views of the 'ulama and the sufis. A *malfuz* of

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1. *Futuh-us-Salatīn*, Madras ed., p. 515. English tr. by Mehdi Husain, Vol. III, pp. 764-765.
  2. *Tarikh-i-Mubarak Shahi*, p. 166.
  3. Barani, *Tarikh*, p. 211.

Sayyad Jalaluddin Bukhari Makhdum-i Jahanian contains a criticism of the taxes<sup>1</sup> which Firuz Shah is reported to have abolished later.

Surveyed as a whole, the fourteenth century forms a watershed in the history of Muslim political thought in India. It was during this period that the *Turkish State* transformed itself into an *Indo-Muslim State* and started moving in the direction of an *Indian State*. The general impression that the process of Indianization of the statecraft was initiated by Akbar is not warranted by facts. 'Alāuddin Khalji saw clearly the contours of a broad-based polity as a *sine qua non* for his expansionist policies; Muhammad bin Tughluq developed it further. Of all the Sultans of Delhi, Muhammad bin Tughluq was inspired by a spirit of *ijtihād* in tackling some of the fundamental problems of religion and politics in India. His deep insight into the Islamic religious sciences,<sup>2</sup> his intimate contact with the Arab world, his predilection for the movement of Ibn Taimiya, his deep faith in the *Khilafat*, his pride in calling himself 'Reviver of the Traditions of the Last of the Prophets' show that he looked to the early Arab traditions for guidance and wanted to articulate the same spirit of original thinking and fresh interpretation which had characterized the early Arabs. The traditions of kingship and royalty as developed in 'Ajam, which had attracted other Sultans of Delhi, had little fascination for him. He looked to the orthodox Caliphs rather than the heroes of Persia for guidance and inspiration in his political life. In fact he stands closer to the early traditions of Islamic polity than any other Sultan of Delhi. This made a fundamental difference in his approach to the problems of religion and politics in contemporary life. The spirit of his administration seems to have been deeply inspired by the traditions laid down by the Omayyad rulers of Sind who were

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1. *Siraj ul Hidayat* Ms. ff. 33a-b. For details Nizami, 'The Suhrawardi silsilah and its influence on medieval Indian politics' in *Medieval India Quarterly*, Vol. III. No. 1 & 2, pp. 116-116.
  2. Both the Indian and the Arab writers testify to the vast erudition and learning of the Sultan. According to *Masalik-ul Absar*, he had committed to memory the *Qur'ān* and the *Hidayat* (p. 37).

quick to decide, in a spirit of *ijtihad*, about the religious status of the Hindus, their fullest participation in administration and absolute religious freedom in constructing temples and following their religious practices.<sup>1</sup> Besides, Muhammad bin Tughluq's efforts to so reconstruct the Muslim religious thought as to bring the 'ulama, the sufis and the governing classes together and inspire them by a common ideal was a bold step and could give a new orientation to Muslim polity in India. Perhaps no other Sultan of India made such a bold, all-embracing and sincere effort to resolve the contradictions in Muslim political thinking and the exigencies of the Indian situation and the role of a Muslim ruler in India as Muhammad bin Tughluq did.

But very often historical processes unfold themselves as a see-saw of action and reaction. After Muhammad bin Tughluq the direction was changed by Firuz Shah Tughluq, but later the process was picked up in the provincial kingdoms. The latter part of the fifteenth century saw the trial of these principles on regional level. The provincial governments enlisted the support of local elements and sought to give as broad a base to their political systems as was compatible with circumstances. In the sixteenth century all these political experiments paved the way for the Empire of Akbar which came very near resolving the contradictions inherent in the situation, but Akbar's religious experiments<sup>2</sup> provoked other reactions which created other problems and pushed back the process.

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1. See, for instance, the Brahmanabad Declarations, *Chach Namah*, ed. Daudpota, p. 209, *et seq* : tr. Fredunbeg, p. 165 *et seq*.

2. From the strictly technical point of view Akbar did not possess the requisite qualifications of a *muftahid* (which Muhammad bin Tughluq pre-eminently possessed), and he approached the problem in a circuitous way by first getting it declared by a group of 'ulama in the service of the State that the status of *imam-i 'adil* (just ruler) was superior to a *muftahid* (interpreter of religious law). His religious thought and actions were not the result of any dynamic spirit of *ijtihad* but were an expression of the eccentricities of his own religious temperament. The result was obvious: neither the Muslims nor the Hindus accepted his religious views and innovations. NIVER

## ***Impact of Iranian Traditions on the Administrative Institutions, Concepts and Practices of the Early Delhi Sultanate\****

The story of India's relations with Iran goes back to hoary past and covers almost every aspect—political, cultural, religious and economic. In this paper a synoptic overview is attempted of the impact of Iranian traditions on the administrative institutions, concepts and practices of the Early Turkish Sultans of Delhi during the thirteenth century.

The Delhi Sultanate, which was the focal point of Indian politics during the early medieval period, bore an indelible stamp of Iranian traditions, suited and adjusted to the Indian milieu. Its administrative structure drew its hue and colour from the Sassanian polity, while its cultural aura reflected Iranian traditions. The spirit of Persian Renaissance, articulated by the Samanid and the Buwayhid rulers and turned into a force by men like Mahmud and Firdausi in the 10-11th

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centuries, was, despite the havoc later wrought by the Ghuzz and the Mongol invasions in Central Asia and Persia, a dominant factor in determining the socio-political ideals of the Delhi Sultans who were racially Turks but Iranian in their outlook and behaviour. From theories of kingship to names and nomenclature of institutions and officers, court etiquette, language, army organization and structure of the Central *diwans*, every detail of the administrative set-up of the Sultanate of Delhi breathed the Persian atmosphere.

The political thought of the Delhi Sultans<sup>1</sup> was nurtured in Iranian traditions, operating both as a historical incident and as a political necessity.

When the caliphal authority began to disintegrate and decline, the concept of *sultanate* gradually evolved. The religious sanctions which had so far buttressed the institution of *khilafat* could no longer be invoked and Mawardi (ob. 1058) thought it prudent to present *sultanate* as an outcome of political necessity rather than as an institution based on religious authority. In fact the *Sultanate*, as a recognized form of government, was essentially an Iranian product and had drawn its form and features from the monarchical traditions of Sassanian Iran. The Sassanians had elaborated an efficient state-apparatus, perhaps the most perfect in the history of Asia Minor,<sup>2</sup> and so the monarchical traditions of Persia could best serve the ideological and cultural needs of the founders of new dynasties. An analysis of the processes through which the Sassanian traditions about the position of the king made their way into the Muslim society may prove an interesting sociological study. Here suffice it to say that the proclamation of Rawandiya<sup>3</sup> to identify the Caliph with God

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1. See, Fakhr-i Mudabbir, *Adab-ul-Harb wa Shuja'a* ed. Ahmad Suhaili Khwansari, *Tarikh-i-Fakhruddin Mubarak Shah* ed. Denison Ross; Barani, *Tarikh-i Firuz Shahi*, pp. 33-35; *Fatawa-i Jahandari*, English translation by Habib and Afsar Khan, *The Political Theory of the Delhi Sultanate*, Aligarh, 1960.
  2. Barthold, *Iran*, p. 37.
  3. Tabari, Vol. III, pp. 129-133. Rawand was a town near Ispahan.

was perhaps the first significant assertion of Sassanian ideas in Muslim society. The sect was no doubt crushed by Mansur (754-775 A.D.) but a hint was taken by the dynasties that followed that some divine attributes had to be associated with kingly authority in order to consolidate personal and dynastic position. The word *sultan* was divested of its original connotation, meaning power or argument,<sup>1</sup> and was used in the sense of a specific political authority. Mahmud may or may not have been the first to be called *sultan*,<sup>2</sup> for Ja'far Barmaki and the Fatimids are reported to have used the title, but it is a fact, as Barthold has pointed out that "the concept of State was brought to its extreme expression under the Ghaznavids, and specially under Mahmud".<sup>3</sup> In his person the concept of *sultan*, which was somewhat vague and nebulous earlier, became

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1. The word is used in the Qur'an (71:7; 68:10; 96:11 etc.) in this sense and there is little evidence—philological or otherwise—to prove that it was used in the sense of any specific political authority during the time of the Prophet. Considered in this context the authenticity of many of the traditions in which the word occurs in this later sense becomes questionable.

Hadises like the following :

لَوْ أَنَّ السُّلْطَانَ لَا كُلَّ النَّاسِ بَعْضُهُمْ بَعْضًا

had obviously little authenticity. Fakhr-i Mudabbir quotes it in *Adab-ul-Harb*, and it appears on the coins of Muhammad bin Tughluq also. (*Chronicles of the Pathan Kings of Delhi*, p. 250; Nelson Wright p. 143). Circulation of such traditions was politically motivated and was intended to add religious argument to the claim of allegiance from the nobles and the people.

2. Barthold writes : ".....under him the title of "sultan" was brought into use, at any rate in court circles. Contrary to the account of the historians it cannot be maintained that this word.....was never applied to individual rulers before Mahmud.....The title of Sultan was also borne by the Fatimids.....Mahmud was called Sultan by the court historians and poets, and probably also by the writers of official documents ; in ordinary life he, like his successors, continued to be called Amir." *Turkestan Down to the Mongol Invasion*, p. 271. According to Ibn Khaldun, Ja'far Barmaki was called *sultan* on account of the power and authority that he exercised.
3. *Four Studies in the History of Central Asia*, p. 70.



a sharp and clear ideal and the institution of *sultanate* came to be associated with his name. It is not without reason therefore, that Barani, the greatest historian of medieval India, turns again and again in his *Fatawa-i Jahandari* to Mahmud and weaves his political theory around his precepts and practices. To him Mahmud was a symbol of kingship and when he addresses 'sons of Mahmud', he actually means those who occupied kingly office and not the progeny of Mahmud, the last representative of whose family, Khusrau Malik, was vanquished at Lahore in 1186 and later put to death in Gharjistan.

The entire civil administration of Mahmud's empire — particularly all *wazirs* and heads of different *diwans*<sup>1</sup> — were Persian and through them Iranian traditions of administration gained a prestige and sanctity in the contemporary Muslim world. Iranian traditions of culture and administration reached the Sultans of Delhi through the Ghaznavids and influenced their processes of thought and pattern of behaviour. What they eagerly sought for and urgently needed for establishing their dynastic position and authority was available in Iranian traditions of royalty. In the administrative sphere Mahmud transmitted the Iranian traditions to posterity, while in the realm of culture the *Shah Namah* of Firdausi fascinated their imagination with the glories of the heroes of Iran. Both had to be emulated if kingship was to be placed on a high and dignified pedestal. When 'Isami thought of writing his *Futuh-us Salatin*, it was the tradition of *Shah Namah* which bewitched him and he could not help saying :

جہاں تا کہ باقی است اندر جہاں  
به شہنامہ باقی است اندر جہاں

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1. Fazli, *Asar-ul-Wuzara*, as cited by Nazim, *The Life and Times of Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna*, 131 n.

ابا دین احمد به تخت کیاں  
جہاندار را داری اندر جہاں

Working under the same impulse he began his account of the Muslim rulers of India with Mahmud. In this first Persian versified history of medieval India, which the author proudly calls *Shah Namah-i Hind*, Iranian traditions run through and through.

These historical, literary and administrative traditions so moulded the contemporary political thought that they developed a political maxim—which became an article of political faith with the early Sultans of Delhi that kingship was not possible without emulating Iranian principles and practices. With this conviction began a flow of Iranian ideas and institutions in the cultural and political life of the Delhi Sultans. Barani who has considered the *non-shari'at* character of medieval governments in his *Fatawa-i Jahandari*, observes :

“Consequently, it became necessary for the rulers of Islam to follow the policy of the Iranian Emperors in order to ensure the greatness of the True Word, the supremacy of the Muslim religion, the power of Truth, the suppression and overthrow of the opponents and enemies of the Faith, the execution of the orders of religion and the maintenance of their own authority”.<sup>2</sup>

In their anxiety to have an ideological fulcrum where religious authorities could not be invoked, the Sultan of Delhi turned to the Sassanian traditions for inspiration and guidance. Their political thought finds an exposition in the works of Fakhr-i Mudabbir, Amir Khusrau and Zia Barani. Balban claimed that kingship was نیابت خداوندی (viceregency of God on earth) and the heart of the Sultan was منظر ربانی

1. *Futuh-us-Salatin*, Madras edition, p. 11.

2. *Political Theory of the Delhi Sultanate*, p. 39.

which received direct guidance from divine Light.<sup>1</sup> This emphasis on divine source of imperial authority buttressed their position and in practical terms meant that the crown was neither a gift of the nobility nor of the people. It existed independent of any earthly support and as it was divine in character, rebellion against the Sultan was a sin (عصیان) and the rebel was a sinner (عاصی).<sup>2</sup> The divine element in royal authority was pressed forward by proclaiming the Sultan as *zillullah fil arz* (Shadow of God on earth).<sup>3</sup> Minhaj calls Iltutmish (العالمین ظل الله فی);<sup>4</sup> Khusrau addresses Kaiqubad again and again as سایه یزدان پاک.<sup>5</sup>

Barani goes a step forward and describes Firuz Shah in the company of his nobles as God surrounded by angles.<sup>6</sup> Such acclamations are definitely an echo of the Sassanian concept of the divinity of kings adapted in a subtle manner to the Muslim milieu. Sometime feeble voices of protest were raised against such titles, but the trend could not be changed, particularly when some of the practices like *pabos* and prostration

1. Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi*, p. 70 *et seq.*

2. *Tarikh-i-Fakhruddin Mubarak Shah*, p. 12; also *Adab-ul-Harb; Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, p. 183.

3. 'Uthi quotes it as a genuine *hadis* at the beginning of his *Kitab-i Yamini* and his commentator al-Manini says that it was transmitted by Tirmizi and others as going back to Ibn 'Umar. *Sharh al Yamini*, Cairo 1286, I, p. 21.

Such *hadises* were obviously later fabrications intended to cast a halo of legality round the person of the Sultan.

See also, Ghazali, *Nasihah-ul-Muluk*, ed. Jalal Humai, Tehran, pp. 39-40.

4. *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, p. 165.

5. *Qir'an-us-Sa'dain*, p. 205 also 20, 25.

6. *Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi*, p. 578.

were prevalent in the *sufi* circles also. A visitor to the *khanqah* of Shaikh Sharafuddin Yahya of Munair, in Bihar, once questioned the justification of calling the Sultan "shadow of God";<sup>1</sup> the saint gave a curt reply implying that the title was basically metaphorical. At the court of Iltutmish there were certain '*ulama*' like Syed Nuruddin Mubarak Ghaznavi who criticised many practices<sup>2</sup>—which were essentially Sassanian—but the Sultans paid little heed to such exhortations.

A very important transmitting channel for the Sassanian traditions in India were the *Wasaya* collections of Iranian heroes—mostly later apocryphal compilations but based on traditions handed down from generation to generation. When unsettled conditions created by the Mongols led to migration of large number of administrators, poets, scholars, saints and artisans<sup>3</sup> from Persian lands to India, the Iranian traditions found another important source for circulation and popularity in India. These emigrants gave an impetus to Iranian traditions as much in *madrasahs* and *khanqahs* as in the courts of the Sultans and the nobles. Barani informs us that scholars at Prince Muhammad's court recited before him *Shah Namah*, *Diwan-i Sanai*, *Diwan-i Khagani* and *Khamsa-i Nizami*.<sup>4</sup> Approximating political attitude and social behaviour to Iranian customs came to be looked upon as an act of sagacity and wisdom. Balban's two long discourses to his sons are based on these traditions. Barani refers to a number of collections like *Wasayai Jamshedi*,<sup>5</sup> Fakhr-i Mudabbir approvingly quotes Ardshir Babakan on essentials of royalty.<sup>6</sup> While

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1. *Ma'adan-ul-Ma'ani*, Vol. I, p. 25.

2. Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi*, p. 41.

3. Isami particularly refers to

کاسبان خراسان زمین

*Futuh-us-Salatin*, pp. 114-115.

4. *Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi*, p. 67.

5. *Political Theory of the Delhi Sultanate*, p. 8.

6. *Tarikh-i-Fakhruddin Mubarak Shah*, pp. 17-18.

discussing the authority of king, his dispensation of justice, his relations with army, people and the peasants, the mind of the medieval Indian historian turns again and again to Iranian traditions as found in different *wasaya* collections. The Sultans of Delhi rescued Jamshed, Kaikhusrau, Kaiqubad and Bahram from their Iranian Pantheon and rehabilitated them in Muslim political consciousness as ideals of social conduct and political behaviour.

All sorts of traditions—genuine and fake—associated with these heroes were revived under the conviction that kingship depended for its vitality and stability on Persian customs and ways of life. The best way to justify recourse to Iranian traditions was to trace their pedigree to Persian heroes. Both Iltutmish and Balban called themselves descendants of Afrasiyab.<sup>1</sup> When Minhaj refers to Shamsuddin Iltutmish, the real founder of the Sultanate of Delhi, as

فریدون فر ، قباد نهاد ، کاؤس ناموس ، سکندر دولت  
بہرام شوکت

his whole concept of greatness seems to rotate round the Iranian heroes. Barani says that<sup>2</sup>

درگاه سلطان شمس الدین درگاہ محمودی و سنجرى  
شده بود

Amir Khusrau found for Kaiqubad no better compliment than an "heir to the crown of Kaiyan".<sup>3</sup>

The genealogical claims of the Sultans may or may not be

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1. Nizami, *Religion and Politics in India during the thirteenth Century*, p. 99.†
  2. *Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi*, p. 27.
  3. *Qir'an-us-Sa'dain*, p. 22.

(Contd. on next page)

correct, but like Buwayhids,<sup>1</sup> they sought to attach their genealogy to the Sassanian ruling house in the hope that it would give a historical basis to their authority. Impelled by the same instinct they sometimes gave Iranian names to their family members. Balban gave the popular names of Muslim families—Muhammad and Mahmud—to his sons born before accession, but his grandsons who were born after his accession were named as Kaiqubad, Kaikhusrau, Kaimurs, after the Persian kings.

The Sassanian polity and social structure was based on the concept of class which had an Indian counter-part in the caste-system. The Sultans of Delhi used those concepts to their advantage and working in the new context developed the idea of distance between royalty and ryot and laid great emphasis on family background in appointment to government services. Balban went to the extent of dismissing low-born persons from government service and instituting enquiry about the genealogies of many families. Following the Sassanian tradition, the Sultan considered it below his royal dignity to talk to low born persons. In his *wasaya* to his son he warns against allowing the low born and irreligious people to interfere in government affairs.

What sustained the political system of the Sultans despite its racial prejudices and class character was their concept of justice, which again was Iranian in content. They seemed to agree with Nizamul Mulk that kingship was possible with کفر but not with injustice. Barani refers to an innate

sense of justice (عدل جبلی) in a ruler and remarks: "No consideration of any harm to himself or to his government can prevent him from enforcing justice."<sup>2</sup> Though in

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وارث اکلیل کیان کیقباد  
کافر جد فرکیایش داد

1. R.N. Frye, *Iran*, p. 50.

2. *Political Theory of the Delhi Sultanate*, p. 52.

this context frequent references are made to traditions of the Prophet and sayings of the early Caliphs, the ideal before them remained Nausherwan.

The court of the Sassanian Kings "whose splendour and luxury were unsurpassed by that of any dynasty in the world's history,"<sup>1</sup> was the ideal for the Delhi sultans. Their palaces were constructed with Iranian models in mind ; the gorgeous trappings, curtains, carpets, embroideries, mural paintings and decorations displayed interest in Iranian pattern their music parties, festivities, processions, court etiquette, rules of procedure, games and sports were all borrowed from Iran and inspired by their example the Turkish nobles vied with one another in planning their miniature courts on the Iranian model. Many of these Persian cultural institutions were transmitted to the Delhi Sultans through the Abbasids who had, both during and after the Barmakid ascendancy, adopted many of the Iranian customs and practices. Mansur was the first to adopt the characteristic Persian head gear (*galanis*).<sup>2</sup> The Sultans of Delhi emulated the Sassanians in having huge crowns made for themselves. According to Fazuni Astarbadi, Balban's crown from its top to the tip of the Sultan's beard was a yard in length<sup>3</sup> and struck the imagination of those who looked at it. An idea of the Iranian influence on the court life of the Delhi Sultans may be had from the following account of Balban given by Barani :

"In the first two years of his reign Balban made excessive efforts to increase the dignity of his court and palace and the grandeur of the royal cavalcade. He employed some Sistani wreslers (*phalwans*) on the salary of sixteen or seventeen thousand *jitals*. They marched with their naked swords resting on their shoulders by

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1. Sykes, *History of Persia*, Vol. I, p. 465.
  2. Tabari, III, p. 371.
  3. *Buhairā*, Iran 1328 A.H., p. 12.

the side of his stirrups. At the time of riding Balban's face was bright; the naked swords would glisten in the light of the shining sun, and in the midst of the glistening swords his face would become a hundred times brighter. The eyes of the onlookers were dazed and filled with tears and they would praise the grandeur of his cavalcade.

"Balban's public *bar* was adorned by his court-officers, chamberlain (*hajibs*), armour bearers (*salahdars*) body-guard (*sarjandars*), army officers, and their deputies, heralds (*chaushes*), criers (*naqibs*) and wrestlers (*pahlwans*). The elephants and horses with their officers were made to stand to the left and right (of the court). With his face shining like the sun and his beard bright as camphor, Balban sat on the throne with such awe-inspiring dignity that the hearts of people began to tremble. At the time of the *bar* the highest officers stood behind the throne; the officers (*shuhnas*) of the elephants, the men of the body guard, leaders of the armour bearers, officers of the horse (*akhurbeks*) and the *amirs* of the slaves were stationed to the right and the left, while their deputies (*naibs*) stood at their proper places. The noise made by the army officers, heralds and criers (*naqibs*) was so great that it caused the onlookers to tremble. If at any time messengers from a far off country or *rais*, *ranas* or *muqaddams* arrived, they would be taken to kiss the ground (before the throne); very often it happened that they became unconscious and fell down because their feet failed them."<sup>1</sup>

This account of a Delhi court compels comparison with the Sassanian court in its grandeur and awe-inspiring impact on the people.

*Pabos*,<sup>2</sup> an essentially Iranian practice, was introduced in

1. Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi*, pp. 30-31.

2. Barani, pp. 38, 142, 295; 'Afif, p. 73.



the *darbar* of the Delhi Sultans. The Iranian festival of *nauruz* was celebrated with great pomp and eclat.<sup>1</sup> The game of *chaugan*, which originated in Iran, was a popular hobby with the Sultans and Aibek died in an accident while playing *chaugan* as Lahore. Falconry and hawking were introduced into Arabia from Persia.<sup>2</sup> The Sultans of Delhi borrowed it from the Ghaznavids. Khusrau gives interesting details about hunting and sports in *I'jaz-i-Khusravi*. These details reveal definite Iranian influence on pastimes and games of the Sultans of Delhi.

Coming to the administrative aspect, the early Turkish Sultans of Delhi developed and perfected the institution of imperial slave-households as an instrument for consolidation of their power. The organization of this household was more or less on the pattern described by Nizamul Mulk in his *Siyasat Namah*<sup>3</sup> under the heading *اندر تربیت غلامان سرائے*

Their rules of training, promotion, transfer and discipline correspond to the principles laid down by Nizamul Mulk. During the first phase of the Delhi Sultanate this household provided the main prop for the power of the Sultans and determined the basic bureaucratic framework for the Sultanate. All the important offices of the palace like *vakil-i-dar*, *chashnigir*, *sarjandar*, *amir-i-majlis*, *saqi-i-khas*, *tashtdar*, *sar-abdar*, *sar-jandar* had Iranian background and their way of functioning was essentially Iranian.

For about a century the political life of the country revolved round them and with the *iqta*s constituting the linch-pin of the system controlled the main political and administrative developments of the period.

Notwithstanding the fact that *iqta*' had existed since the

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1. Barani, pp. 113-114; 'Afi, p. 360; *Qir'an-us-Sa'dain*, pp. 73, 82, 109.
  2. Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, p. 340.
  3. Edited by 'Abbas Iqbal, Tehran, pp. 129-146.

early days of Islam as a form of reward for service to the state, it was during the Seljuq period that its theory and practice came to assume a significance in the history of land-tenure.<sup>1</sup> The Sultans of Delhi adopted this institution and adapted it to the Indian situation. Nizamul Mulk thus explains the position of the *muqta'i* and the rules about *iqta'* which guided the Sultans of Delhi also in their *Iqta'* administration :

“The *Muqtas* should know that their right over the subjects is only to take the rightful amount of money or perquisite (*mal-i haqq*) in a peaceful manner.....the life, property and the family of the subject should be immune from any harm.....the *muqtas* have no rights over them; if the subject desired to make a direct appeal to the Sultan, the *muqta'i* should not prevent him. Every *muqta'i* who violates these laws should be dismissed and punished.....the *muqtas* and *walis* are so many superintendent over them as King is superintendent over other *muqtas* .....After three or four years, the *amils* and *muqtas* should be transferred so that they may not be too strong.”

The *iqta'* system provided the Sultans with an effective local apparatus to help the centre in integrating its resources, establishing law and order and consolidating its power.<sup>2</sup> Nizamul Mulk was impelled by almost similar considerations in assigning the yield and the revenue of *iqtas* to troops.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant in Persia*, 1953, p. 76. Chapter III contains an illuminating discussion of the various aspects of the *iqta'* system.
  2. For details, Nizami, *Religion and Politics in India during the Thirteenth Century*, pp. 128-131.
  3. “Nizam-ul Mulk saw that the money was not coming in from the country on account of its disturbed state and that the yield was uncertain because of its disorder. Therefore he divided it among the troops in fiefs, assigning to them both the yield and the revenue. Then interest in its development increased greatly and it returned rapidly to a flourishing state,” as quoted by B. Lewis, *The Arabs in History*, London, 1950, p. 148.

The army organization of the Delhi Sultanate—training, review, discipline and disbursement of salary—was a replica of the Iranian traditions suited to Indian conditions. If the thought of Fakhr-i Mudabbir is analysed in all its details it would appear that he had in mind a picture of the Iranian system of military organization. Officers like *ariz*, *sipah salar*, *sahib-i barid-i lashkar*, *sar-i khail*, and *amir* compel comparison with their counterparts in Iranian history.

Apart from the army, the main central executive machinery of the Delhi Sultanate with its offices like, *Diwan-i Wizarat*,<sup>1</sup> *Diwan-i Risalat*, *Diwan-i Insha* etc. had deep impact of Iranian traditions. Christensen's chapter on *Dabir* under the Sassanians reads like an exposition of the functions and position of the *dabir* under the Sultans of Delhi.<sup>2</sup>

The role of the Persian language in integrating the administrative structure and machinery of the Sultanate period cannot be over-emphasized. Persian was throughout the period the main official language in which all official correspondence was carried on wherever the writ of the Sultan ran. Amir Khusrau thus refers to the historical role of *Dari*<sup>3</sup> in creating a uniformity in administrative traditions :

گفتار پارسی در هندوستان از لب آب سند تا محیط دمانه

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1. About the position of Wazir in Sassanian administration, see Christensen, *ایران در زمان ساسانیان* tr. by Rashid Yasmi, p. 135; for position in Delhi Sultanate, see Qureshi, *Administration of the Sultanate of Delhi*.
  2. *ایران در زمان ساسانیان* p. 153 et seq.
  3. "The general spoken language of the Sassanian court and the Sassanian administration in provincial centres of Iran was called *Dari*.....the proper, standardized Persian spoken by the upper classes and in cities was *Dari*". Frye, *The Heritage of Persia*, London, p. 252.

دریا يك زبان است . ابن پارسی ما پارسی دریست ... زبان  
 هندوی هر صد کرو می و هر گرو می اصطلاح دیگر است  
 اما پارسی دریں چهار هزار و اند فرسنگ یکیست ، و پارسی  
 است که ادائے زبان بانقش کتابت موافق مطابق است

1

Persian literary traditions determined the style and spirit of the official documents from *Fath Namahs* to routine instructions to officers in far flung parts of the Empire. The first manual on army organization (*Adab-ul Harb*) and the first work on the maintenance of official records (*Ilm-ul Hisab*)<sup>2</sup> are in Persian.

Even when discussing the functions and position of historians, Barani's mind goes back to Iranian traditions.<sup>3</sup>

از کیومرث تا خسرو پرویز مواجب و موافق مورخان  
 تعین بودے

He even wanted to write an account of Khusrau Parvez<sup>4</sup> because there was much in his life which could be a source of inspiration and guidance for later generations of scholars and administrators.

Political thought and administrative aspects apart, if one surveys the historical landscape of the Delhi Sultanate during the thirteenth century a number of Iranian cultural streams

1. *Dibacha*), *Ghurra-ul-Kamal* Delhi, p. 33.

2. '*Ilm-ul-Hisab*,' Abdul Hamid Muharrir Ghaznavi, Manuscript in Raza Library, Rampur.

3. *Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi*, p. 18.

4. *Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi*, p. 20.

in the realm of social traditions, literature, mystic thought and historiography seem flowing in every direction, enriching the soil and contributing to the variegated culture—pattern of India.

## *Naqshbandi Influence on Mughal Rulers and Politics\**

Of the numerous mystic orders of Islam that have worked in India,<sup>1</sup> the Naqshbandi silsilah alone considered it not only permissible but imperative to establish contact with the rulers, and to attempt to influence their thought and policies. The Chishtis gave a wide berth to the government and the rulers of the day;<sup>2</sup> the Suhrawardis<sup>3</sup> and the Shattaris<sup>4</sup> mixed with the kings and aristocracy and gave moral support to them but did not attempt any reorientation of their thought; the Qadiris and the Firdausis generally maintained an attitude of dignified aloofness in political matters. The Naqshbandis held that since the life of the rulers had a deep impact on the

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\* Paper read at the 26th International Congress of Orientalists held at Delhi, January 1964.

1. Abul Faḍl has mentioned [14 such orders] in his *Ā'in-i-Akbari* (Sir Syed Edition) II, p. 203.
2. The Chishtī attitude towards the state has been discussed by the writer in a series of articles published in *Islamic Culture*, Vol. XXII, No. 4; Vol. XXIII, Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4; Vol. XXIV, No. 1.
3. See the writer's article in *Medieval India Quarterly* (Aligarh) Vol. III, Nos. 1 and 2 pp. 109-149.
4. Idem, *Medieval India Quarterly*, Vol. I, No. 1, pp. 56-70.

life of the people,<sup>1</sup> it was necessary to establish contact with them and influence their thought and action. Consequently they played a very important part in shaping the religious outlook of the rulers which in varying degrees had its effect on the shape and direction of political life. This paper aims at drawing attention to the influence that the Naqshbandis exercised on the Indian Mughals and their politics till 1760.

The Naqshbandi silsilah is an offshoot of the *silsilah-i Khwājāgan*, which was organized in Turkistan by Khwaja Ahmad Ata Yasvi (ob. 1166),<sup>2</sup> whom the Turks respectfully refer to as *Haqrat-i-Turkistan*.<sup>3</sup> In the 14th century, Khwaja Bahau'd-Din Naqshband (ob. 1389),<sup>4</sup> a spiritual descendant of Khwaja Ata, revitalized the silsilah and popularized it amongst the Turks and the Mongols of Central Asia and Mawara-un-Nahr. His impact on the silsilah-i-Khwajagan was so great that after his name the silsilah came to be known as the Naqshbandi silsilah. The first saint of this order to arrive in India was Shaikh Baba Wali<sup>5</sup> who settled in Kashmir, but the work of organizing the order effectively in India was done by Khwaja Baqi Billah<sup>6</sup> (ob. 1603) and his chief disciple Shaikh Ahmad of Sirhind, popularly known as

1. Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi remarks in one of his letters :

صلاح بادشاه صلاح عالم است و فساد او فساد عالم

(Well-being of the king is well-being of world; his corruption is corruption of the world). *Maktubāt-i-Mujaddid-i-Alf-i-Thānī*, (Nawal Kishore 1877). Vol. I, p. 18. Developing his point further, he compares the king to soul in the human body and remarks : "If the soul is pure, the body is also pure ; if the soul is impure, the body too is impure." *Maktubāt*, Vol. II, p. 135.

2. For biographical account of the saint, see *Islamic Ansiklopedist*, Vol. I, pp 210-215.
3. Shaikh Farid-ud-din 'Attār refers to him as *Pir-i-Turkistān*, *Mantlaq-ut-Tayar*, (Bombay 1297 A.H.) p. 182.
4. *Vide*, *Nafahāt-ul-Uns* (Lucknow 1915), pp. 345-349 ; *Rashahāt*, (Kanpur, 1912), pp. 53-57 ; *Anis-ul-Tālibīn*, (Lahore, 1323 A.H.).
5. *Kalamāt-i-Tayyabāt*, Malfūzāt of Khwaja Bāqi Billah, (Delhi 1332 A.H.), pp. 4-5.
6. For biographical account, see *Zubdat-ul-Maqāmāt*, (Nawal Kishore ed. 1307 A.H.) pp. 5-61.

Mujaddid-i-Alf i-Thani (ob. 1624). Shah Wali Ullah, the famous Muslim divine and scholar of the 18th century, also belonged to this silsilah. For nearly two centuries the Naqshbandi silsilah was the principal spiritual order in India and its influence permeated far and deep in Indo-Muslim life. Just as the foundation and expansion of the Chishti silsilah synchronizes with the rise and fall of the Sultanate of Delhi, the history of the Naqshbandi order is closely related to the period of the rise and fall of Mughal power in India, so much so that the change from Akbar to Aurangzeb is inexplicable without a clear and unbiassed appraisal of the part played in it by the Naqshbandi saints.

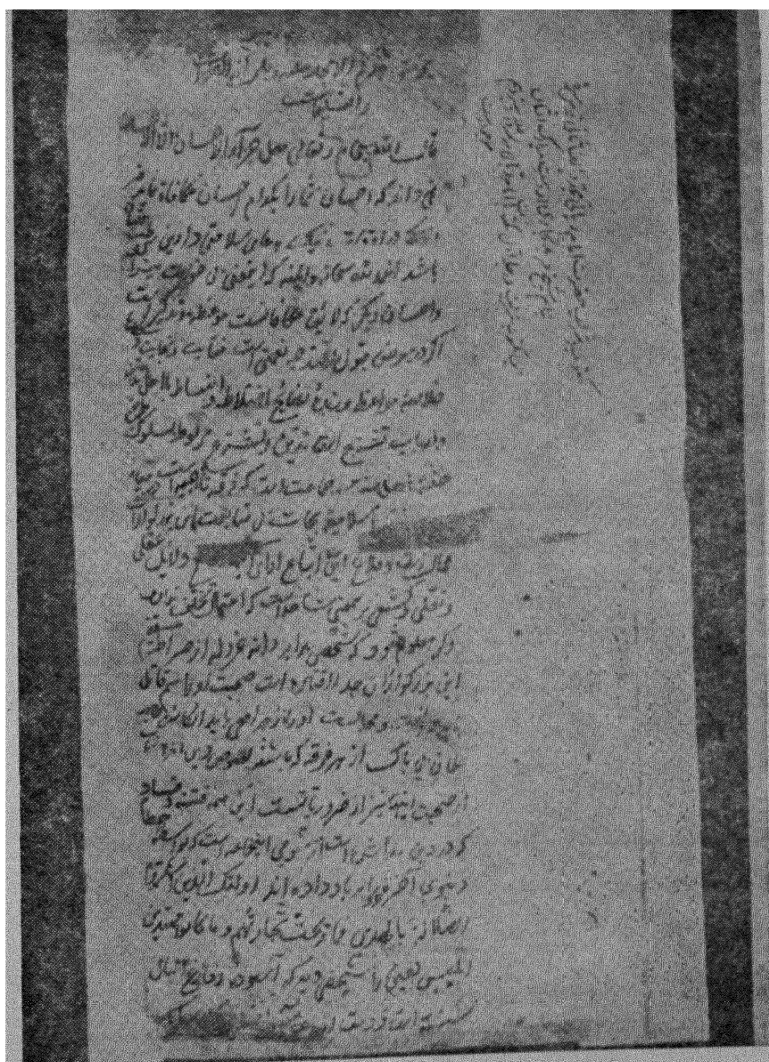
An important contributory fact which is generally lost sight of while studying the influence of Naqshbandi saints on the Indian Mughals, is that all the Central Asian and Transoxianian towns which the Indian Mughals, considered their ancestral possessions, were strongholds of the silsilah, and that from Timūr downwards there was an unbroken tradition of respect, devotion and attachment to the Naqshbandi saints in their family. A distinguished Chishti saint of the 17th-18th century wrote as follows to one of his disciples in the Deccan who was trying in vain to influence the religious outlook of Aurangzeb :

پادشاه هندوستان از اولاد امیر تیمور است و امیر تیمور  
ارادت بخدمت شاه نقشبند داشت . این تورانیان قاطبة وکلهم  
اجمعون منسلک در سلسله نقشبندیہ اند ، و هیچ سلسله دیگر  
را وزن نمی نهند

“The Emperor of Hindustan is a descendant of Amīr Timur and Amīr Timūr was spiritually attached to Shah-i-Naqshband. These Turanians, all and every one of them, are connected with the Naqshbandi order and they do not attach any value to any other silsilah.”

1. *Maktubāt-i Kalīmī*, Letters of Shāh Kalīmullah of Delhi, (Delhi 1301 A.H.) p. 75.





A letter in the handwriting of Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi  
Mujaddid-i Alf-i Sani

[Courtesy Maulana Zaid Abul Hasan Farooqi,  
Dargah Mirza Mazhar, Delhi]



It was Tīmūr who built the tomb of Khwaja Ata and paid respectful visits to his shrine.<sup>1</sup> He treated Khwaja Bahā'u'd-Dīn Naqshband with profound respect,<sup>2</sup> while his descendants married into the saint's family.<sup>3</sup> Mirza Ḥaider Dughlat has described in detail how the Timurid princes used to receive Khwaja 'Ubaid Ullah Aḥrar, a spiritual descendant of Khwaja Naqshband, "standing at a distance with their eyes fixed on the ground."<sup>4</sup> Yunus Khan, Sulṭān Aḥmad Mirza, 'Umar Shaikh Mirza and other notable Timurid princes sometimes referred their internecine conflicts to him for arbitration. On one occasion these princes had even drawn up their forces on the battlefield when Khwaja 'Ubaid Ullah Aḥrar arrived, and his intercession brought about an immediate cessation of hostilities. Every one submitted to the terms dictated by him.<sup>5</sup> Babur's father, 'Umar Shaikh Mirza, was a disciple of Khwaja 'Ubaid Ullah Aḥrar.<sup>6</sup> Referring to his father's devotion to the saint, Babūr remarks: "*As His Highness the Khwāja was there, accompanying him step by step, most of his affairs found lawful settlement.*"<sup>7</sup> Babūr inherited from his father a deep regard for the Naqshbandī saints and a feeling of close spiritual affinity with them.

Babūr was deeply attached to Khwaja Muḥammad Qadī, a Khalifa of Khwaja Aḥrar. After his conquest of Hindustan, some descendants of Khwaja 'Ubaid Ullah Aḥrar came to India. Babūr invited them to a feast in Agra. "I sat on the north side of the newly-erected octagonal pavilion," he writes in his Memoirs, "..... on my right sat Khwaja 'Abdus Shahid and Khwaja Ḳalan, descendants of His Reverence the Khwaja ('Ubaid Ullah Aḥrar).....together with the *hāfizes* and mullas

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1. *Zafar Nāmah*, Yezdī (Bib. Indica), II, p. 9-10.

2. *Makutabāt-i-Mujaddid-i-Alf-i-Thāni*, Vol. II, p. 162.

3. Khāja Ḥasan (Khwajazada-i-Chighanian), a grandson of Khwāja Bahā'u'd-Dīn Naqshband, was son-in-law of Sulṭān Maḥmūd Mirzā, son of Sulṭān Abū Sa'īd Mirzā (*Akbar Nāmah* II, p. 97).

4. *Tārīkh-i-Rashīdī* (Translated by Ross,) p. 97.

5. *Tārīkh-i-Rashīdī*, p. 113.

6. *Bābūr Nāmah*, (Translated by Mrs. Beveridge), p. 33.

7. *Bābūr Nāmah*, p. 34.

dependent on the Khwaja who had come from Samarkand.”<sup>1</sup> Babūr gave them rich presents. Later on he sent a copy of the *Bābūr Nāmah* to Khwaja Kalan.<sup>2</sup> Whenever he was in trouble, his mind went back to the saints of this silsilah for spiritual solace and benediction. Once when he fell ill, he thought of versifying Khwaja Aḥrar’s *Risālah-i-Wālidiya* because, as Babūr himself puts it : “I laid it to heart that if I, going to the soul of His Reverence for protection, were freed from this disease, it would be a sign that my poem was accepted, just as the author of the *Qasidat-u’l-Burda* was freed from the affliction of paralysis when his poem had been accepted.”<sup>3</sup>

Years later when Prince Humayun fell seriously ill at Sambhal, Babūr was deeply upset by his protracted illness. Following a practice recommended by the Naqshbandī saints,<sup>4</sup> he walked three times round the sick-bed and then exclaimed that he had borne away Humayun’s sickness.

Babūr’s descendants respected the tradition of their ancestors. When Khwaja Khwand Maḥmūd, a descendant of Khwaja Aḥrar, came to India, Humayun received him with great honour.<sup>5</sup> Kamran became the disciple of Khwaja ‘Abdul Ḥaqq, a brother of Khwaja Khwand Maḥmūd.<sup>6</sup> Akbar accorded a welcome to Khwaja Shahid.<sup>7</sup> When Khwaja Hashim Dah Bundi sent a book to Jahangīr, he wrote about

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1. *Bābūr Nāmah*, p. 631.

2. *Bābūr Nāmah*, pp. 633-653.

3. *Bābūr Nāmāh*, p. 62.

4. The author of *Iqbāl Nāmah* (I, p. 20) informs us :

بخلوت خاص در آمده شغلے کہ در سلسلہ قدسیہ خواجہائے  
نقشبند رضوان اللہ علیہم اجمعین مقرراست بجا آورده سه بار  
بر گرد فرزند سعادت پیوند گردیدند .

5. *Gulzār-i-Abrār*, Muḥammad Ghauthī Shattā’ī, (MS).

6. *Gulzār-i-Abrār* (MS.).

7. *Akbar Nāmah*, II, p. 195 ; *Gulzār-i-Abrār* (MS.).

the sincere attachment (نسبت اخلاص) between his family and that of the saint.<sup>1</sup>

A new phase in the history of the Naqshbandi silsilah began when Khwaja Baqi Billah reached India from Kabul. These were the closing years of Akbar's reign. The Shaikh established a Naqshbandi Khanqah at Delhi and devoted all his time to the spiritual and moral uplift of the people. A large number of nobles as well as common men flocked to him and Nawab Murtuza Khan Shaikh Farid undertook to bear all the expenses of his Khanqah. Humble and unobtrusive in his ways, the Shaikh carried on his work of religious and moral reform amongst the people without getting involved in any way in politics. But when Shaikh Ahmad of Sirhind joined his mystic fold the atmosphere changed and the palace also came within the orbit of Naqshbandi activity.

Born in 1563 at Sirhind, Shaikh Ahmad grew to manhood and passed forty years of his life in Akbar's India. An uncompromising monotheist, he did not agree with those religious experiments of Akbar which he had made with the ideological support of pantheistic philosophy, and which had elements which ran counter to the orthodox Islamic concept of *Tawhid* (monotheism). He, therefore, sharply reacted to them. His reaction changed the direction of many of the social and cultural forces of the time and ultimately also determined the attitude and policy of the Mughal emperors towards them.

Now there can be no two opinions about Akbar's magnificent achievements in the political and cultural sphere. His ideal of the state in which all Indians irrespective of religious distinction should participate as copartners; his anxiety to build a nation on the basis of common political and economic interests; his breadth of vision which refused to accept any narrow or parochial divisions of society; his attempts to make the total Indian heritage available to his contemporaries

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1. *Tuzuk-i-Jahāngīrī*, p. 149.

through translations of Sanskrit classics—all these factors ushered in the dawn of a new era in the history of this country and fulfilled one of the crying needs of the hour and also set a pattern for present-day India. But when he tried to assume the religious leadership of the people, he crossed the Rubicon and entered a sphere where a storm of controversies was bound to envelop him. Herein lay the source of Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi's criticism of Akbar. It is pertinent that the Hindu reaction to Akbar's religious experiments was equally unfavourable.<sup>1</sup> Raja Bhagwan Das and his son Man Singh both refused to accept the religious innovations of Akbar. "I certainly am a Hindu," Mansingh boldly told Akbar, "If you order me I will become a Musalman, but I know not of the existence of any other religion than these two."<sup>2</sup> This attitude is significant and seems to be inspired by the same feelings which forced Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi to accept a situation in which:<sup>3</sup>

مسلمانان بردین خود بشند و کفار برکش خود آیه و لکم دینکم  
ولی یدین، بیان این معنی است

"The Muslamans should follow their religion and the Hindus should follow their religious ways. The Quranic verse: 'For you your religion and for me my religion' illustrates this."

As Akbar was a Muslim, his religious activities could not escape scrutiny by his co-religionists, all the more so when some other Muslims at the court also seemed to be moving to the same point of view.

Why did the idea of dabbling in the religious life of the people occur to Akbar and what were its general

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1. The general Hindu disapproval of his religious experiments is clear from the fact that Raja Birbal's is the only Hindu name in the list of Akbar's disciples.
  2. *Muntakhab-u't-Tawārikh*, (Bib. Indica Series), Vol. II, 364.
  3. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. I, p. 65.

repercussions ? Abul Fadl puts a question: 'But have the religious and the worldly tendencies of men no common ground?' And then proceeds to answer it : "Whenever from lucky circumstances, the time arrives that a nation learns to understand how to worship truth, the people will naturally look to their king on account of the high position which he occupies and expect him to be their spiritual leader as well.' Then he remarks about the position of Akbar : "He now is the spiritual guide of the nation."<sup>1</sup> It was this "spiritual leadership" of Akbar which had far and wide ramifications. While recording reactions to Akbar's religious experiments, Abul Fadl says : 'Every faction went about in the streets of ignorance and the back-lanes of wickedness foolishly and spreading calumnies. On every side there arose the dust of commotion and the black smoke of darkness. Assemblage of wickedness congregated together."<sup>2</sup> Further he remarks : "The pleasant land of India became full of the dust of opposition."<sup>3</sup> This was Akbar's own doing. When everything seemed to be moving in the right direction in an atmosphere of general goodwill and co-operation, his venture in the religious domain suddenly changed the entire atmosphere. His attempt to work out a synthesis of religions was a task too difficult for rulers or politicians to accomplish. As a matter of fact, had not Akbar interfered in the religious sphere, the religious and cultural forces which were working in India and had given birth to cosmopolitan and syncretic trends, as expressed in the Shattari and the Bhakti movements of this period, would have themselves worked out a synthetic religious approach.

How did Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi analyse the situation and what were his reactions to it ? In his letters he says again and again that the world has sunk in heresy and innovation *دولت در دوائے بدعت غرق گشته است*.<sup>4</sup> *Bid'at* meant to him dissuasion from looking to the Prophet as the source of

1. *A'in-i-Akbari*, Blochmann, Vol. I, p. 172.

2. *Akbar Nāmah*, III, 397, also 396-400.

3. *Akbar Nāmah*, III, p. 532.

4. *Makrūbāt-i-Mujaddid-i-Alf-i-Thānī*, Vol. II, p. 103.

all religious guidance and inspiration. He was all in favour of *Qiyās* and *Ijtihād*, provided it was within the framework of the *Qur'ān* and the *Sunnah*.<sup>1</sup> He was, however, opposed to *bid'at* (deviation from the *Qur'ān* and the *Sunnah*) being interpreted as *Ijtihād*. He argued that *Ijtihād* was not *departure* from the *Sunnah* but its *application* to new problems and situations. Only one who followed the Prophet, he says, followed God : *من يطع الرسول فقد اطاع الله* :<sup>2</sup> He condemned those 'ulamā and mystics of his day who encouraged deviations from *Sunnah*. In a letter he writes that the 'ulamā of his day were responsible for introducing innovations and obliterating the *Sunnah*.

3.

علماء این وقت رواج دهند های بدعت اند و محو کنند  
های سنت

He thought that since the court was the real centre of all such religious experiments, it was necessary to bring about a change in its atmosphere. He turned to the nobles for that purpose and wrote letters to Nawab Murtuza Khan Shaikh Farid, 'Abdur Rahīm Khan-i-Khanan, Mirza 'Aziz Koka Khan-i-Āzam, and others, exhorting them to stop religious vagaries and experiments at the court. Now, these letters show that that there had been previous consultation and that mutual understanding had been reached. They could not have written to high dignitaries of the Empire unless the saint had found his ideas receptive. No serious student of history can thus evade the conclusion that in the later years of Akbar's reign, under the influence of Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindī, a definite ideological cleavage had developed between Akbar and his nobles. This conclusion is supported by Jahangir who remarks in his *Tuzuk* :<sup>4</sup>

1. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. I, p. 187.

2. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. I, p. 155.

3. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. II, p. 103.

4. *Tuzuk-i-Jahāngirī*, Text p. 9 ; Eng. Tr. I, p. 22.



در ایام شامزادگی قبل از وقوع بیماری بزرگوارم و در ایام  
بیماری ایشان که رائے ارکان دولت و امرائے ذی شوکت  
متزلزل گشته

“Whilst I was a prince and before my revered father’s illness, and during that time, when the ministers (pillars of the state) and high nobles had become agitated...”

What part did the Naqshbandi saints then play in the accession of Jahangir? Ignoring the accounts of the later Naqshbandi writers who make tall claims in this respect, one may analyse the early available evidence—direct and circumstantial. Jahangir informs us in his *Tuzuk* that his accession to the throne was predicted six months before Akbar’s death by a saint,<sup>1</sup> who was interested in securing the release of a person, connected with the Naqshbandi silsilah. This is a significant piece of information. Further, we find two eminent disciples of Khwaja Baqi Billah—Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi<sup>2</sup> and Shaikh ‘Abdul Haqq Muhaddith<sup>3</sup>—writing letters to Nawab Murtuza Khan and through him to Jahangir, welcoming his accession and expressing deep concern at what had happened during the preceding regime. In a letter to Lala Beg, who had earlier supported Salim’s rebellion and was one of his confidants, Shaikh Ahmad wrote at this time.<sup>4</sup>

در ابتدائے بادشاهت اگر مسلمانی رواج یافت و مسلمانان اعتبار  
پیدا کردند فیها ر اگر عیاذا بالله سبحانه . در توقف افتد در بر  
مسلمانان بسیار مشکل خواهد شد.

“If at the very commencement of the (new) regime,

1. *Tuzuk-i-Jahāngīrī*, p. 13.

2. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. I, pp. 64-66; Vol. III, pp. 82-83.

3. *Kitāb-u’l-Makātib-wa’r-Rasā’il* pp; 84-91; *Mir’āt-al-Haqā’iq* p. 65.

4. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. I, p. 106.

Muslim ways are introduced and the Muslims regain their confidence, well and good ; if, God forbid, this is delayed, the position will become very difficult for the Musalmans."

The Naqshbandī writers' claim that Jahangīr had made certain commitments on his accession is confirmed by the Jesuit accounts. Father Du Jarric says, "Accordingly, the leading noble (i.e. Shaikh Farīd, about whom it may be recalled that he was closely associated with Shaikh Aḥmad Sirhindī), having been sent by the other as their representative, came to Prince (Salīm) and promised, in all their names, to place the kingdom in his hands *provided that he would swear to defend the law of Islam.*"<sup>1</sup> Father Du Jarric is corroborated by Ferano Guerreiro who informs us about Jahangīr : "*he had sworn an oath to the Moors to uphold the law of Mafamede (Muhammad).*"<sup>2</sup>

If the letters of Shaikh Aḥmad Sirhindī and Shaikh 'Abdul Haqq are read in the light of these observations of the Jesuit Fathers, the background clears up and one is constrained to conclude that Shaikh Aḥmad Sirhindī and others of his school of thought did play some part in the accession of Jahangīr.

For nearly 14 years after the accession of Jahangīr there was no significant development in Shaikh Aḥmad Sirhindī's relations with the Emperor. What the Emperor thought of the Shaikh and what the Shaikh thought of him is not known. But one thing is certain. Shaikh Aḥmad Sirhindī's influence and prestige increased tremendously during this period. According to Jahangīr himself, the *Khalifas* of the saint operated in every town and city (گشتہ بہ ہر شہرے و دیارے)

(متزلزل).<sup>3</sup> All of a sudden in his 14th regnal year, Jahangīr

1. *Akbar and the Jesuits*, 204.

2. *Jahangir and the Jesuits*, C.H. Payne, p. 3.

3. *Tuzuk-i-Jahāngirī*, pp. 272-273.

decided to put him in Gwalior prison<sup>1</sup> and the charge against him was a letter he wrote to his spiritual mentor, Khwaja Baqī Billah, about some of his spiritual experiences. Now the letter on the basis of which he was condemned was written during the reign of Akbar, since the Khwaja to whom the letter was addressed died in 1603, and it was available to people even before Jahangir's accession.

Why did Jahangir not take any notice of Shaikh Aḥmad's movement till 1619? Was he now compelled to take some action against him due to changes brought about in the court politics with the advent of Nūr Jahan? Naqshbandī writers put the blame on Nūr Jahan and her clique at the court. Their statements may be exaggerated, but there is no doubt that there was some faction at the court which was responsible for all this. Dara Shukoh informs us that whatever had been done to the Shaikh was due to the calumny and malicious misrepresentations of opponents (افترا و بهتان مخالفان).<sup>2</sup>

After a year's imprisonment, Shaikh Aḥmad Sirhindī was set free. It appears from his letters that he remained with Jahangir for some time and had long audiences with him in which he explained the Quranic verses and the basic ideas of Islam.<sup>3</sup> He put forward his point of view boldly and

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1. It appears from a letter that the Shaikh's house, garden, library and other belongings were also confiscated (*Maktūbāt*, III, p. 7). The Shaikh faced the situation with confidence and determination and did not waver from the position he had taken up. When his sons and relations tried to secure his release, he wrote to them not to waste their time in this pursuit. (*Maktūbāt*, Vol. III, p. 7). His disciples were also harassed. The Shaikh advised them to stand the ordeal coolly and with patience (*Maktūbāt*, III, p. 19). Quoting Shaikh Muḥī u'd-Dīn Ibn 'Arabi, he says that when an 'arīf is visited by some calamity or misfortune he should not pray to God for averting; he should calmly and patiently enjoy whatever calamity is sent by his Beloved, God. (*Maktūbāt* III p. 19).

2. *Safinat-u'l-Awliyā*, pp. 197-198.

3. He writes in a letter from the palace; III, p. 76.

courageously. In a letter he writes about his meetings with Jahangir :<sup>1</sup>

بعنايت الله سرموئی درين گفتگو هاى امور دينيه و اصول اسلاميه مساهله و مدافعه راه نمى يابد و همان عبارات كه در خلوات و مجالس خاصه بيان مى گردد درين معر كه ها بتوفيق الله سبحانه بيان مى نمايد.

“By the grace of God, in these conversations about religious matters and the principles of Islam, no negligence or hypocrisy was allowed to affect me even to the point of a hair. The same discourses which I used to deliver in private and before special gatherings, by God-given strength, I delivered during these tussles.”

On the night of the 17th of Ramadan he explained to the Emperor such concepts as بعثت انبياء (sending of prophets),

عدم استقلال عقل (Instability of Reason), ختم رسالت (End of Prophethood), ثواب (Reward) and عذاب (Punishment).

The Emperor listened to him with attention and, as the Shaikh remarks, did not show any sign of disapproval.<sup>2</sup> How far was Jahangir influenced by his thought? It is difficult to find any consistent application to the religious ideology of Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi in the life or thought of Jahangir, probably because there were influences at the court—one of them being

احوال و اوضاع اين حدود مستوحب

حمد است . صحبتهاى عجيب و غريب ميگذارند

1. *Makrūbāt*, Vol. III, p. 76.

2. *Makrūbāt*, Vol. III, p. 76.

Nūr Jahan herself—which pulled him in another direction and continued to work against Shaikh Aḥmad Sirhindī and others of his school of thought. During the closing years of his life Jahangīr angrily summoned from Kashmir a *Khalifa* of Shaikh Aḥmad Sirhindī, Shaikh Ḥusam-u'd Dīn, and Shaikh 'Abdul Ḥaqq Muḥaddith Dihlawī (whom he had earlier praised in his *Tuzuk*). This time also, as Dara Shukoh informs us, the ears of the emperor were poisoned by certain people.<sup>1</sup> The extent of Shaikh Aḥmad's influence on Jahangīr is a moot point, but this much is certain that Jahangīr did not pursue Akbar's policy of dabbling in religious matters and making religious experiments. Probably he realized that the policy of religious experimentation created more problems than it solved.

But Shaikh Aḥmad and his movement got introduced at the court, and one cannot fail to find a gradual change in the religious life and attitude of the Mughal rulers. Akbar's religious cosmopolitanism was abandoned by Jahangīr; Jahangīr's indifference to religion is given up by Shahjahan; Shahjahan's attempt to keep personal religious ideas out of politics is ignored by Aurangzeb, who applies his religious views to administration. Akbar had brought religion into politics inspired by his zeal for religious cosmopolitanism; Aurangzeb introduced religion into politics impelled by an orthodox religious attitude, created by the Naqshbandī saints.

It is not possible here to go into the details of Aurangzeb's religious policy, but the influences that worked on him and determined his religious attitude may be indicated. It was as a prince that Aurangzeb established contact with Khwaja Muḥammad Ma'ṣūm, son of Shaikh Aḥmad Sirhindī. In his three volumes of letters—*Wasīlat-u's-Sa'adat*, *Durrat-u't-Taj* and *Maktubāt-i-Ma'sūmiya*—we find 6 letters addressed to Aurangzeb. When Aurangzeb proceeded on the Qandhar campaign (1649-1652), the saint wrote a long letter<sup>2</sup> to the prince in which he emphasized the superiority of 'protecting,

1. *Sakīnat-u'l-Awliya* (MS.) pp. 64-65.

2. *Durrat-u't-Taj*, Letter 64.

'the frontiers' to sitting in solitary contemplation (*Chillah*). But further he pointed out to him that there was an enemy inside man and this was "evil" and fighting this enemy brought greater reward than campaigning against outside enemies. It appears from another letter that Aurangzeb had accepted the Naqshbandi discipline in toto and observed many of the practices prescribed by the *silsilah*.<sup>1</sup> Shaikh 'Abdul 'Alim, Shaikh Muḥammad Baqir Lahori, and Khwaja Muḥammad Sharīf Bukhari are mentioned as the persons through whom letters were exchanged between the saints and the Emperor. It appears that at the request of Aurangzeb, Khwaja Ma'sūm sent his son Shaikh Saif-u'd-Dīn to supervise personally the spiritual practices of Aurangzeb.<sup>2</sup> When Shaikh Saif-u'd-Dīn reported to his father the experiences of Aurangzeb, he wrote to him that such experiences were rare among rulers and expressed great satisfaction at his spiritual progress. Once Aurangzeb wrote to him asking about *بارگزارى جهاندارى* and *حسن خاتمه*<sup>3</sup> i.e., how to discharge efficiently the responsibilities of governance while looking after personal spiritual health.

Another son of Khwaja Ma'sūm, Maḥammad Naqshband, was also in close touch with Aurangzeb for many years. His collection of letters *Wasilat al-Qubūl ilallah war Rasūl*<sup>4</sup> contains several letters addressed to the Emperor. In a letter to his friend, he says:<sup>5</sup>

بادشاه دین پناه از کمال اخلاص و عنایت  
از خود جدا نمی فرمودند

(The faith-protecting king did not keep me away from him on account of intensely sincere attachment and kindness.)

1. *Makrūbāt-i-Ma'sūmiya*, Letters, 6, 122, 194, 220.

2. *Makrūbāt-i-Ma'sūmiya*, Letter 221.

3. *Makrūbāt-i-Ma'sūmiya*, Letter 227.

4. Edited by Dr. Ghulam Muṣṭafa Khan, Hyderabad-Sind, 1963.

5. *Wasilat-u't-Qubūl*, p. 139.

Aurangzeb's religious thought was thus deeply influenced by the teachings of the Naqshbandī saints and it found expression in his political activities also.

It would be unfair not only to Shaikh Aḥmad Sirhindī but to history to brush aside his movement as narrow and sectional. There is no doubt that on one or two occasions he has made certain remarks which are bitter and uncalled for, but they are not the essence of his movement. As a matter of fact his attitude was a reaction to Akbar's religious experiments and to the atmosphere it had created at the court. As soon as that atmosphere disappeared, his attitude underwent a great change. In letters written subsequently one does not find any bitter criticism or exclusiveness. The suggestion made by some writers that the movement of Shaikh Aḥmad Sirhindī was against 'Akbar's attempt at secularizing the state, is based on a misunderstanding. What Shaikh Aḥmad objected to was Akbar's interference in religious matters and his assuming religious leadership. He wrote during the reign of Jahangīr :<sup>1</sup>

در سلطنت پیشین عنادے بدین مصطفوی علیہ الصلوٰۃ والسلام  
مفہوم می شد، و درین سلطنت ظاہرا آن عناد نیست، اگر  
ہست از عدم علم هست .

"In the previous regime, the activities (of the court) amounted to hostility towards the religion of Muḥammad. But in the present reign there is no open hostility. If there is, it is due to ignorance."

The fact that Shaikh Aḥmad Sirhindī felt satisfied with what Jahangīr was able to do in the beginning of his reign<sup>2</sup> throws considerable light on the expectations of the Shaikh, as well as the purpose of his movement. Further, it may be noted that Dara Shukoh, who was a great champion of liberal,

1. *Makrūbat*, I, p. 45.

2. *Maktuāt*, I, p. 193.

and cosmopolitan thought, did not find in the Shaikh's movement the venom and prejudice which some modern Indian critics of the Shaikh are prone to attribute to him. Dara Shukoh respectfully refers to him and gives him a place in his *tadhkirah*, where many other contemporary and early saints are simply ignored. To read nothing but sectarianism in his letters and to dismiss his mystical thought as lacking in depth and originality is to betray deplorable ignorance of the history of Muslim religious thought. Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi was one of those few Indo-Muslim thinkers whose thought attracted the Muslim scholars outside the frontiers of India and whose letters were translated into the Turkish and Arabic languages.

Another outstanding Naqshbandi saint who exercised great influence on contemporary politics was Shah Waliullah of Delhi. When he appeared on the stage of history, the age of the Great Mughals was over. He had neither an Akbar nor an Aurangzeb to deal with. Centrifugal tendencies were then working in every sphere and the Mughal Empire was nothing more than the phantom of a forgotten glory. This change in political situation determined the attitude of Shah Waliullah. While Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi had mainly appealed to the ruler and nobles, Shah Waliullah turned to the people and appealed to almost every section of the Muslim society for reform and removal of political abuses.<sup>1</sup> His interest in politics was not confined to support of individual rulers. He applied himself to an analysis of the causes of political decay. During his stay in Hijaz he had studied the conditions of other Muslim lands as well.<sup>2</sup> He was thus fully conversant with the social and political trends in the Muslim world in the 18th century. Like most Muslim writers of the middle ages he did not simply focus his attention on the administrative and financial bankruptcy of the state. He went deep into the causes of moral inertia and analysed carefully the factors which had devitalized Muslim society by disturbing its

1. See *Tafhimāt*, published by the Majlis-i-'Ilmi, Dabhal.

2. *Kalimāt-i-Tayyabāt*, a collection of the letters of Shah Waliullah, Mirza Maqhar and others, p. 209.



economic equilibrium and creating schism in its soul. He believed that 'adl (equity and justice in every sphere of human relationship) and *tawāzum* (balance in economic relationship) alone could sustain a political structure. Unlike Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindī, he did not merely confine himself to religion. He looked into the economic side also and referred to those inequalities in the economic system which had crept into the economy of the Empire and had impoverished its revenue producing classes. In an illuminating chapter of the *Hujjat-ullah-il-Bāligha* he has discussed the social and economic abuses which led to the downfall of the Roman and the Sassanid Empires—the principle of hereditary succession, narrow and materialistic outlook of the governing classes, their licentiousness and debauchery, the economic exploitation of the people, the inequitable and cumbersome taxation system, the misery of the peasants and artisans and the growth of parasitic classes inside and outside the court. While discussing these factors, he remarks : "There is no need of repeating these old stories when you are seeing now all these things in the lives of the rulers of your cities."<sup>1</sup>

In his famous work *Hujjat-ullah-il-Bāligha* he refers to two causes leading to chaos and disintegration : the pressure of parasites on the public treasury and the burden of heavy taxation on the peasants and merchants.<sup>2</sup> He advised the Mughal Emperor to reduce the jagir lands and extend the Khaliṣa area; condemned the practice of farming revenues, and suggested a reorganisation of the army.<sup>3</sup> He exhorted him to rise to the occasion and set things right by adopting bold administrative measures. The Mughal government was no doubt corrupt and inefficient, but it alone could sustain the social and political order in the country. The Mughal rulers had grown effete. Shah Waliullah's call fell on deaf ears. He then turned to the other Muslim chiefs, like Nizam-u'l-

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1. *Hujjat-ullah-il-Bāligha*, Vol. I, p. 199.

2. *Hujjat-ullah-il-Bāligha*, I, p. 79.

3. *Shāh Waliullah Kāy Siyāst Makrūbāt* pp. 42, 160 etc.

Mulk<sup>1</sup> and Najib-u'd-daula.<sup>2</sup> Since Nizam-u'l-Mulk was too deeply engrossed in Deccan politics, he turned to the Rohilla chief and wrote: "I clearly see that the regeneration of *millat* depends upon you."<sup>3</sup> The role that Shah Waliullah played in the Battle of Panipat has been dealt with elsewhere.<sup>4</sup> It was the thought of Shah Waliullah which inspired Shah 'Abdul 'Aziz to issue a *fatwa* against the British Government, inspired Syed Ahmad Shahid to fight at Balakot and led to the rise of movements like the Fara'izi movement of Bengal. No appraisal of political development during the Mughal period can be considered complete if the role of figures like Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi and Shah Waliullah is ignored or minimized. It is in the light of the interaction of many complex religious and political forces of the period that the processes of historical change during the 17th and the 18th centuries should be studied.

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1. *Siyāsi Maktūbāt* pp. 79.

2. *Siyāsi Maktūbāt*, pp. 80-84.

3. *Siyāsi Maktūbāt*, p. 67.

4. See *Islamic Culture*, Jubilee Number Vol. XXV/I 1951, for the writer's article: 'Shah Waliullah Dehlavi and Indian Politics in the 18th century', pp. 133-146.

# III

## Culture and Religion



## *Attitude of the Early Muslim Mystics Towards Society and State During the Sultanate Period\**

Commenting on the role of mystics in the growth of civilizations Professor Toynbee remarks : "It is through the inward development of personality that individual human beings are able to perform those creative acts, in the outward field of action, that cause the growth of human societies".<sup>1</sup> One is constantly reminded of this remark while assessing the role of Muslim mystics in the social and cultural history of our country. India, with her multi-racial, multi-religious and multi-lingual pattern of society, has always stood in need of and has always welcomed men imbued with high moral ideals who could, in the words of Rabindranath Tagore "set at naught all differences of men by the over-flow of their consciousness of God".<sup>2</sup> The Muslim mystics of the Sultanate

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\* An Extension lecture delivered at Visva-Bhārati, Shantiniketan.

1. *Study of History*, Abridged Ed. p. 212.
2. *Nationalism*, p. 6.

period belong to this category of Good-conscious men who rose above all narrow and parochial divisions of society and strove to find a unity for the heterogeneous elements that make up its totality.

Long before the establishment of Turkish rule in India many Muslim saints entered this country and set up mystic centres at a number of places. Systematic organization of *silsilahs*, however, began almost simultaneously with the foundation of the Sultanate of Delhi when two of the most important mystic orders — the Chishtiyya and the Suhrawardiya — were introduced in India. In the century that followed they spread out far and wide, built up their organizations and established themselves in their respective zones. Within a short span of time the entire country, from Multan to Lakhnauti and from Panipat to Deogir, was studded with *khanqahs*, *jama'at khanahs*, *daeras* and *zawiyahs*. Early in the 14th century a traveller informed Shihab-u'd-din al-'Umari at Damascus: "In Delhi and its neighbourhood are *khanqahs*, and hospices numbering two thousand."<sup>1</sup> These *khanqahs*, numerous and extensive as they were, soon wove themselves into the complex culture-pattern of India and contributed some of the essential elements to the growth of cosmopolitan tendencies in Indian society. The attitude of the Muslim saints towards society and state was sharply in contrast to that of the Muslim governing classes and the orthodox sections of the theologians. Greater dynamism, better appreciation of other people's point of view, and a desire to remove the contradictions between static theology and the rapidly changing conditions of life characterized their approach in all matters. They threw open the doors of their *khanqahs* to all sorts of people — rich and poor, citizens and villagers, Hindus and Muslims, free born and slaves, men and women, scholars, politicians, merchants, artisans, peasants and others and in no time their hospices became veritable centres of cultural synthesis where ideas were freely exchanged and a common medium for this exchange was evolved.

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1. *Masalik al-Absar fi Mamlik al-Amsar*, English translation by O. Spies, p. 24.

Mysticism, it is said, has no genealogy. It is the eternal quest of man, in all ages and under all climes, to have direct communion with the Infinite and the Eternal and to use the power so gained by nearness to the Absolute for the well-being of man. "The soul of the great mystic," remarks Bergson, "does not come to a halt at the (mystical) ecstasy as though that were the goal of a journey. The ecstasy may indeed be called a state of repose, but it is a repose of a locomotive standing in a station under steam pressure with its movement continuing as a stationary throbbing while it waits for the moment to make a new leap forward... The great mystic has felt the truth flow into him from its source like a force in action. His desire is with God's help to complete the creation of the human species... The mystic's direction is the very direction of the *elan* of life."<sup>1</sup>

The pivotal point of the thought of the early Indo-Muslim mystics was their concept of religion which also constituted the basis of their attitude towards society and state. When asked to explain the highest form of religious devotion (*ta'at*), Shaikh Mu'in-u'd-din Chishti, the founder of the Chishti order in India, remarked : "It was nothing but feeding the hungry, providing clothes to the naked and helping those in distress."<sup>2</sup> Elaborating the same view, Shaikh Nizam-u'd-din Auliya once observed : "Devotion to God is of two kinds : *lazmi* (Intransitive) and *muta'addi* (Transitive). In the *lazmi* devotion, the benefit which accrues is confined to the devotee alone. This type of devotion includes prayer, fasting, pilgrimage to Mecca, recitation of religious formulæ, turning over the beads of rosary etc. The *muta'addi* devotion on the contrary, brings advantage and comfort on others; it is performed by spending money on others, showing affection to people and by other means through which a man strives to help his fellow human beings. The reward of *muta'addi*

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1. *Les Deux Sources de la Morale et la Religion*, pp. 246-51, as quoted by Toynbee, *Study of History* (Vol. I-VI), pp 212-13.
  2. *Siyar-u'l-Auliya*, p. 185.

devotion is endless and limitless.”<sup>1</sup> This identification of religion with the service of humanity had revolutionary dimensions and while extricating religion from the narrow meshes of ecclesiastical formalities and ego-centric religious practices, invested it with tremendous possibility to strive for the moral and spiritual culture of man. Salvation, for a medieval Muslim mystic, was not something to be obtained in the world beyond; it was to be attained here and now by the healthy development of cosmic emotion—an emotion which drew its sustenance from sympathetic identification with the problems of the misery-stricken and the down-trodden mass of humanity. God is not so much a creator to be acknowledged as an Existence to be felt—not as an abstraction but as a reality embodied in the living and inanimate creatures around us.

“Performing prayers day and night,” remarked an eminent mystic of medieval India, “is a work more befitting an old widow than a mystic.”<sup>2</sup> A mystic’s work was to strive day and night to bring happiness to the hearts of men by alleviating their miseries. The *leitmotif* of his life was :

دل بدست آور که حج اکبر است  
ز هزاران کعبه یک دل بهتر است

(Bringing solace to a human heart is like Haj-i Akbar,  
One heart is better than a thousand Ka'bas.)

Every visitor to a saint brought some problem with him. “My brother is ill”, “My officer is harsh to me,” “I am worried about the marriage of my daughters,” “I have a big

1. *Fawa'id-ul-Fu'ad*, pp. 13-14.

2. *Saroor-u's-Sudur*, (Ms) quotes Shaikh 'Abdullah Harawi :

نماز گزاردن کار یوه زنان است و روزه داشتن صرفه نان  
است، حج کردن کار بیکاران است. دلی دریاب که کار آنست



family but have no means of livelihood." "My profession brings no profit to me" so on and so forth. To attend to these multifarious problems must have put a heavy pressure on the nerves of a Shaikh, but he seldom allowed anybody to leave the *khanqah* unsatisfied. In fact, immediate material solution of all these problems was something beyond the means of the mystics, but with their deep insight into human character they assuaged the wounds of their visitors and gave them that unshakable faith in God and moral values which sustained them in the midst of the severest tribulations of life.

During the days of Sultan 'Ala-u'd-din Khālji some people, in an after-dinner conversation, referred to enormous gifts and presents that constantly flowed into the *khanqah* of Shaikh Nizam-ud'-din Auliya and remarked that the saint's life was free of all worries and was one of affluence and plenty. A disciple of the Shaikh who happened to be there, reported this conversation to his master. "No body in this world," remarked the Shaikh ruefully, "has as much grief and worries as I have. So many people come to me and tell me about their worries which put my heart on the rack. How can a man listen to so many worries and remain unaffected?"<sup>1</sup> The Shaikh's life bears out every word of what he said. He would often refuse to eat in the small hours of the morning when those who fast throughout the day eat something. "This morsel sticks in my throat when I think that in the streets of Delhi and on the balconies of shops some people are sleeping who have not taken any thing last night."<sup>2</sup> It was this deep and genuine concern for men in distress which made the mystics cynosures of public eyes. A heart that beats in sympathy with others commands universal respect.

The early Muslim mystics had to apply their ideals of human welfare to three distinct social situations in India :

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1. *Khair-u'l-Majalis*, p. 105.

2. *Siyar-u'l-Auliya*, p. 128.

(1) the caste-ridden structure of Indian society, (2) the narrow and racially conditioned ideology of the Muslim governing class and (3) the rigid and orthodox thinking pattern of the 'ulama. Their reactions to these situation reveal the nature and extent of their impact on the processes of social change in India. Since people belonging to the lower strata of society were precluded from the programmes of all these three, the Sufis turned to them and gave them the self-confidence and courage they needed in their struggle for existence. Their work in this respect was organized on the bedrock of the principle that all people are the children of God **الخلق عايل الله** and that in doing good to a man no discrimination of any type should be allowed to blur the vision. A man, said Shaikh Mu'in-u'd-din Chishti of Ajmer, should develop river-like generosity, sun-like affection, and earth-like hospitality<sup>1</sup>—as the river, the sun and the earth extend their benefits to all and sundry, so also a man should rise above all narrow considerations in dealing with his fellow human beings. Inspired by this ideal of human service the early Muslim mystics applied their energies to the problems of contemporary society.

(1) Alberuni has described in detail the social condition of India, in the 11th century. It appears from his account that the principle of caste which formed the basis of the Indian social system at that time had eaten into it very vitals. Whatever the circumstances under which the system originated, it had resulted in the total annihilation of any sense of citizenship or of loyalty to the country as a whole. The principle of caste, as Dr. Beni Prasad has observed "strikes at the root of individuality and amounts almost to a denial of personality."<sup>2</sup> Added to this was the idea of physical contamination. Alberuni who, as R.C. Dutt remarks, "took pains to study Indian civilization and literature in a catholic spirit", has noted with disgust and amazement the working of this idea

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1. *Siyar-u'l-Auliya*, p. 46.

2. *The State in Ancient India*, p. 12.

in the social life of the people. The workers and artisans—know as Hadis, Domas, Chandals and Badhatus—and the non-descript mass of humanity known as Antyaja had to live outside the cities, deprived of all amenities of civic life. If a careful survey is made of the sites where the earliest Muslim saints built their hospices in India, it will be found that they existed outside the caste-cities. A statistical analysis of the earliest Indian entrants to the Muslim mystic fold would likewise reveal that many of them belonged to the Antyaja group—sellers of curd, rope-makers, etc. etc.

(2) The Turkish Sultans of Delhi drew their inspiration from the Sassanid social and political ideals and looked down upon any contact with the common man. Balban would not talk to the low-born, would not approve the appointment of even an Indian born Muslim to any post in his government. He is even reported to have contemptuously rejected the request of a merchant of Delhi who offered his whole wealth if the Sultan condescended to honour him with a single audience. Perhaps Amir Khusrau had Balban in mind when he said :

غرض وراتے امکان چہ خیال فامد است این  
موس جمال سلطان بدل گدا نشسته

(What an impossible desire has taken roots in the heart :  
the desire of a beggar to have a vision of the Sultan.)

The distinction between *sharif* and *razil* so persistently emphasized by the governing class—as one finds elaborated in Barani's *Fatawa-i-Jahandari*—was gall and wormwood to the mystics. They demonstrated the working of the principle of social equality in their *khanqahs* and *jama'at khanqahs*. In fact the *palace* and the *khanqah* assumed during the Sultanate period the significance of two distinct symbols, representing two diametrically opposed approaches to life. Though within the political confines of the Sultanate of Delhi, the *khanqahs* did not form part of the Delhi Empire. A penniless pauper

was received there in the same way in which the Sultan of Delhi was received. An incident cited in the *Fawa'id u'l-Fu'ad* very neatly illustrates the nature of this attitude. A ruler visited a saint who was busy putting patches on his frock (*khirqā*) with the tattered garment spread over his legs. The wazir in attendance of the ruler quickly stepped forward and thrice asked the saint to fold his legs. The saint ignored his request and when the ruler had come close to him, he turned to the wazir and said : "Look here! I have closed my hands ; I can, therefore, stretch my legs." By their superb indifference towards rulers, the mystics registered their disapproval of and disgust against the parochial ideologies of the governing classes. At a time when the country was resounding with the din and clatter of the arms of the Turks, the atmosphere of the *khanqahs* acted as a corrective to the political hysteria of the period. They sat cool and collected in their tumbling huts, teaching lessons of human love and equality while the armies of the Sultans sought solution of their problems with sword and fire. Only one instance will suffice to show how the governing class attitude stirred the conscience of certain people who repaired to the *khanqahs* to integrate their shattered personalities. Hamid<sup>1</sup> was in the service of Malik Tughril, a slave-noble of Sultan Balban. One day while standing before his master, Hamid's conscience pricked and said : "Hamid! Why are you standing before this man ?" Hamid tried to calm the qualms of his conscience by saying : "Why should I not stand before him ? I am his servant. He is the master. He gives me my pay why should I not stand before him ?" His conscience refused to be satisfied and said : "You are a scholar, he is an ignorant man. You are a free man, he is a slave. You are a pious man, he is a sinner." Hamid could no longer compromise with his conscience. It was not a good bargain to surrender one's self-respect for a few pieces of silver. He left Tughril and spent the rest of his life at the *jama'at khanah* of Shaikh Farid-u'd-din Ganj-i-Shakar at Ajodhan.<sup>2</sup> Tughril later rebelled against

1. *Fawa'id-u'l-Fu'ad*, p. 204.

2. *Fawa'id-u'l-Fu'ad*, p. 204; *Siyar-u'l-'Arifin*, pp. 54-55

his master at Lakhnauti but could not achieve the freedom he longed for; the rebellion of Hamid's conscience relieved him from the bonds of a whole social order.

(3) The orthodox, formal and externalist attitude of some *'ulama* never met with the approval of saints. They disdained entering into acrimonious debates or casuistical controversies with them but in their own lives demonstrated the working of more dynamic principles. They did not ask for abrogating the religious law; they demanded the fulfilment of its main purpose: the culture of man's inner life. They were quick to appreciate the spirit of the milieu and quicker still to adjust themselves to it. When they found that festive element was an inalienable part of Hindu religious life, they also adopted audition parties and despite the objections of *'ulama* who compelled Iltutmish and Ghiyas-u'd-din Tughluq to convene *mahzar* meetings to consider its legality, continued to hold *qawwalis* in their *khanqahs*. Shaikh Jalal-u'd-din Tabrizi who later came to Bengal and settled here, criticised a qazi of Badaon<sup>1</sup> for mere mechanical performance of religious practices which had no meaning unless accompanied by a genuine religious spirit born of cosmic emotion (*'ishq*).

The *ulama* insisted that the door of *ijtihad* (i.e. fresh interpretation of problems) had been closed and that instead of going to the two basic sources of law—the Qur'an and the *Sunnah*—the Muslims had to follow the law as it had been codified centuries ago by the founders of the four schools. The mystics believed that a recourse to the basic sources of law was necessary in order to enforce the principle of movement in the structure of Islam. The attitude of the *sufis* at a *mahzar* meeting in the court of Ghiyas-u'd-din Tughluq<sup>3</sup> brings to light a sharp conflict between the rigid and the flexible trends of thought during the Sultanate period.

Thus the energies of the early Indo-Muslim mystics were

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1. *Fawa'id-u'l-Fu'ad*.

2. *Siyar-u'l-Auliya*, pp. 528-530.

mainly directed towards undoing, in their own unobtrusive and uncontroversial manner, the evil consequences of caste, racial prejudices and religious exclusivism. This attitude articulated a deep and genuine spirit of humanism in their day to day life. (a) They looked upon all men as members of a common human family. Theological categorization of men into Believers and non-Believers was of little or on significance to them. Shaikh Hamid-u'd-din Nagauri, a distinguished *khalifa* of Shaikh Mu'in-u'd-udin Chishti of Ajmer, admonished one of his disciples for addressing a Hindu as *Kafir*. "You never know," he told the erring disciple, "what the inner spiritual life of this man is!" Shaikh Abdul Quddus Gangohi a distinguished Chishti saint of the 16th century declared in unequivocal terms:<sup>1</sup>

این چه شور و این چه غوغا کشاده ،  
 کسی مومن ، کسی کافر ، کسی مطیع ،  
 کسی عاصی ، کسی در راه ، کسی بے راه ،  
 کسی مسلم ، کسی پارسا ، کسی ملحد ، کسی ترسا ،  
 همه در یک سلك است .

(Why this meaningless talk and clamour about the believer, the Kafir, the obedient, the sinner, the rightly guided, the misdirected, the Muslim, the pious, the infidel, the fire-worshipper. All are like beads in the same rosary).

(2) They rejected all ideas of social and racial superiority. "A mystic does not recognize slavery"—says the *Fawa'id-ul-Fu'ad*. Even the slightest expression of assumed or implied superiority by a disciple was resented by the mystic teachers. Shaikh Nizam-u'd-din Auliya expelled from his *khanqah* a senior disciple, Maulana Burhan-u'd-din Gharib, when the Shaikh came to know that he used to sit in an arrogant way,

1. *Maktubāt-i-Quddusi*, p. 205.

leaning on a pillow while supervising the preparation of food in his *langar khanah*.<sup>2</sup> (3) They rejected completely the idea of physical pollution through contact with any human being. There are instances of saints dining with low-caste people. Shaikh Nasir-u'd-din Chiragh had no hesitation in mixing with the lepers even.<sup>3</sup>

This humanism helped the Muslim saints in understanding India and the basic character of her composite society. For them India was neither *dar-ul-harb* nor *dar-ul-Islam*. It was God's earth with variety of men and stores of wisdom—a land where Adam and Eve first walked and where the Prophets Shis and Ayyub lay buried. Sayyid Jalal-u'd-din Bukhari Makhdum-i-Jahanian once said :<sup>1</sup>

چندین انواع نعمت‌ها و الوان رنگ‌ها بنی آدم و کنوز  
حکمت‌ها که مخصوص بزمین هندوستان است در بحر و بر  
جهان نیست

(So many gifts of God and such a variety of men and treasures of knowledge as one finds specifically in India are not to be found anywhere else in the whole world)

Amir Khusrau so closely identified himself with the milieu that he looked upon all Indian historical heritage as part of his own historical self. In his *Nuh Sipihr* he declares :

نیست هندو ار چه که دیندار چو ما  
هست بسے جائے با اقرار چو ما

(Though a Hindu is not a believer like me, he nevertheless believes in many things in which I do.)

1. *Siyar-u'l-Auliya*, pp. 279-281.

2. *Siraj-u'l-Hidayah*, ma'fuz of Syed Jalaluddin Bukhari Makhdum-i-Jahanian (MS).

3. *Siraj-u'l-Hidayah*, (MS).

The mystic concept of religious tolerance, rooted as it was in their ideals of humanism, needs some elucidation. The spirit of toleration, remarks Gibbon, may arise from very different attitudes of the mind of man. There is the toleration of the philosopher to whom all religions are equally true; of the historian to whom all are equally false; and of the politician to whom all are equally useful. There is the toleration of the man who tolerates other modes of thought and behaviour because he has himself grown absolutely indifferent to all modes of thought and behaviour. There is the toleration of the weak man who, on account of sheer weakness, must pocket all kinds of insults heaped on things or persons whom he holds dear. Obviously these types of tolerance have no ethical value. On the other hand they unmistakably reveal the spiritual impoverishment of the man who practices them.<sup>1</sup> True toleration is begotten of intellectual breadth and spiritual expansion, and it is the toleration of a spiritually powerful man who while following his own faith in all sincerity, can tolerate and appreciate all forms of faith other than his own. It was this spirit of tolerance which inspired the lives of the Muslim mystics of the Sultanate period when they declared :

ایسے کہ طعنہ زبت بہ ہندو ری  
آموز ہم زوے پرستش گری

(O you who sneer at the idolatry of the Hindu, learn also from him how worship is done).

The two most important spheres in which their ideals of tolerance found the fullest expression were Religion and Language. They refused to accept them as divisive factors in society. One morning Shaikh Nizam-u'd-din Auliya went up to the roof of his house near which flowed the Jumna. He found a large number of Hindus busy worshipping the idols—a sight which would have brought derisive comments from the

1. Muhammad Iqbal, *Islam and Ahmadism*.



orthodox theologians. He, however, remarked :<sup>1</sup>

ہر قوم واسط راہے دینے و قبلہ کاہے

(Every community has its own path, its own religion and its own House of Worship).

A deep and genuine spirit of appreciation for the multi-religious character of Indian society underlies this remark. The Sufi saints honestly believed in the essential unity of all religions and wanted to make their pantheistic thought — whose earliest exposition in the history of human thought is found in the *Upanishads* — an ideological bridge between Islam and Hinduism. They could discern elements of truth in diverse forms of religious behaviour and could see beneath a plethora of variegated images some quest for truth and some search for reality. They admired the Hindu devotional songs in the early hours of the morning and could not withhold their appreciation for the spirit which carried a Hindu widow to the burning pyre of her husband.

In the matter of language, the mystic attitude has been neatly epitomised in this verse by the famous San'ai :

سخن کز بہر دین کوئی چہ عبرانی چہ سریانی  
مکان کز بہر حق جوئی چہ با بلقا چہ جابلسا

(What matters it whether the words thou utterest in prayer are Hebrew or Syrian or whether the place in which thou seekest God is Jabalqa or Jabalsa).

In a multi-lingual society this attitude was a guarantee against all types of tensions and conflicts. Whenever the mystics settled in India they adopted the local languages and dialects for communicating with the people. It is for this reason that in the growth of Indian vernaculars the role of Muslim mystics was the most outstanding. They invested the local languages

1. *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, English Translation by A. Rogers, Vol. I, p. 169.

with the dignity they deserved and prescribed devotional practices in them. Their aim was emotional integration and they did not consider language an impediment in the realization of that objective. Their motto was

هم دلی از هم زبانی بهتر است

(To be of one heart is better than to be of one tongue).

What causes the disintegration of a society and what guarantees its well-being? They believed that a schism in the soul of human beings underlay the tragedy of social disintegration. The only way to check it was to awaken moral responses in man. A spiritually integrated and morally autonomous personality was an effective bulwark against fissiparous tendencies. Through him alone the moral equilibrium of society could be maintained or restored.

In the wake of the establishment of Turkish power in India came a revolution in the character of the cities and urban life and very naturally an aggravation in the evils and vices associated with this type of culture-growth. A cursory glance through the pages of the *Qir'an-us-Sa'dain* of Amir Khusrau and the *Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi* of Barani gives the reader an idea of the atmosphere that prevailed in Delhi after the death of Balban and before the advent of 'Ala-u'd-din, Khalji. The Sufi saints acted as a counterweight in maintaining the moral equilibrium of medieval society.

Two pictures from contemporary life bearing on the theme, can spotlight the impact of saints on medieval society. Zia-u'd-din Barani thus describes life in Delhi during the reign of Mu'izz-u'd-din Kaiqubad.

"Voluptuaries and convivalists, seekers of pleasure, purveyors of wit, and inventors of buffooneries who had been kept in the background, lurking, unemployed, without a customer for their wares, came into request.

Courtesans appeared in the shadow of every wall and elegant forms sunned themselves on every balcony. Not a street but sent forth a master of melody or a chanter of odes. In every quarter a singer or a songwriter lifted up his head... The Emperor, his nobles, their children, and all sensualists and epicures who lived under his rule, one and all themselves up to gluttony and idleness, and the hearts of high and low alike were engaged in wine and love, song and carnival.... Distilleries appeared everywhere. For the men of title, the men of letters, there was nothing left to do but to drink wine, to make the assemblies sparkle with their wit, to vie with each other in repartee, to resign themselves to music and dice and largess, and the zest of the passing hour, anything to prop up life against the insidious sapping of time, and give night and day their fill of pleasure and repose. Notorious rufflers and gray sinners trained beautiful girls—irresistible with their bright glances and radiant wit—to sing and strike the lute, and chant canzonets and to play at drafts and chess.”

The same historian thus describes the impact of Shaikh Nizam-u'd-din Auliya on the lives of the people in the same Delhi during the time of 'Ala-u'd-din Khalji :

“The Shaikh had opened wide the doors of his discipleship, admitting people to his discipline, confessing sinners and pervading with religious habits all classes of men—nobles and commoners, rich and poor, learned and ignorant, citizens and villagers, soldiers and warriors, free men and slaves; and these persons refrained from many improper acts because they considered themselves disciples of the Shaikh; if any one of them committed a sin, he confessed and vowed allegiance anew. The general public showed an inclination to religion and prayer; men and women, young and old, shop-keepers and servants, children and slaves, all came to say their prayers. Many platforms with thatched roofs were con-

structed on the way from the city of Ghiyaspur (where the Shaikh had established his *khanqah*), wells were dug water-vessels were kept, carpets were spread, and a servant and a *hafiz* were stationed at every platform so that people going to the Shaikh should have no difficulty in saying their prayers on the way. And on every platform a crowd of men could be seen saying their supererogatory prayers. Owing to regard for the Shaikh's discipleship all talk of sinful acts had disappeared for the people. There was no topics of conversation among most people except inquiries about prayers... They inquired about fasting and prayers and about reducing their food. Many persons took to committing the Qur'an to memory. The new disciples of the Shaikh were committed to the charge of the old. The older disciples had no other occupation but prayer and worship, aloofness from the world, and the study of books and of lives of saints... There was no quarter of the city in which a gathering of the pious was not held every month or every twenty days with mystic songs that moved them to tears... owing to the influence of the Shaikh, most of the Muslims of the country took an inclination towards mysticism, prayers and aloofness from the world and came to have faith in the Shaikh. The faith was shared by 'Ala-u'd-din and his family. The hearts of men having become virtuous by good deeds, the very name of wine, gambling and other forbidden things never came to anybody's lips. Muslims out of regard for one another refrained from open usury and monopolistic practices (*ihltkar*), while the shopkeepers, from fear gave up speaking lies, using false weights and deceiving the ignorant. Most of the scholars and learned men, who frequented the Shaikh's company, applied themselves to books on devotion and mysticism."

In bringing about this atmosphere in society the mystics were guided by certain basic principles and ideals of life :

- (1) They believed that only by doing good to all, a solid base of human relationship can be built up.

A man's relation with another man, they used to say, may be of any one of the following three types : (a) He may be neither good nor bad to another. This is what happens in the non-living world (*jamadat*). (b) He may do no harm to another but only what is good. This too is not enough. (c) A man should do good to another, and even when good is returned by evil, he should not hesitate in doing good to the wrong doer.<sup>1</sup> It is this course which, according to Shaikh Nizam-u'd-din Auliya, a mystic was expected to follow. Retribution and revenge were laws of the animal world. 'If a man puts a thorn in my way and I also put a thorn in his way, it will be thorns everywhere.'<sup>2</sup> If wrong is returned by good, it saves conflict and tension and creates healthy atmosphere in society. Do not suppress your anger; forgive the offender. Suppression leads to psychological complications: forgiveness eliminates all such tensions.

(2) They believed that crime cannot be eliminated through punitive laws. What was needed was not punishment, but sympathetic persuasion—an understanding of the 'sources' where 'crime' has its 'retreats' and a determination to demolish those 'retreats' through patient and sympathetic understanding of his problems. The first requisite to achieve this was to hate the sin and not the sinner. Whoever started hating the sinner closed for all time the doors of his reform.

(3) Use of force aggravates human problems. Pacifism and non-violence is bound to move the conscience of the aggressor. Non-violence is not a surrender to the strong but an expression of determination to stick to one's principles bravely breasting all misfortunes and calamities that it might entail. Shaikh Nasir-u'd-din Chiragh of Delhi refused to go to Devagiri at the order of Muhammad bin Tughluq and silently bore all the tortures to which his emaciated frame, already rendered weak by constant vigils and penitences, was sub-

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1. *Fawa'id-u'l-Fu'ad* p. 91.

2. *Fawa'id-u'l-Fu'ad* p. 87.

jected.<sup>1</sup> Muhammad bin Tughluq was over-stepping the limits of a medieval government when he demanded the transfer of his *khanqah* from a place entrusted to him as his *walayat* by his deceased spiritual master and he demonstrated that he could be tortured but could not be made to yield.

With this brief survey of the attitude of the Muslim mystics towards society and its problems, we might turn to their relations with the state. It may be pointed out that in this respect the attitudes of the two early *silsilahs*—the Chishtiya and the Suhrawardiya—were diametrically opposed to each other. The Suhrawardis visited the courts of the Sultans; accepted gifts and *jagirs* from them, amassed wealth and had no hesitation in taking up government service. The contemporary mystics often objected to this as a negation of the mystic ideals but the Suhrawardis ignored this criticism and said: "Poison does not harm me who knows the antidote."<sup>2</sup> The Chishtis rejected contact with the state in every form. Their attitude was in keeping with the accepted tradition of Islamic mysticism.

There were historical, legal and psychological reasons for this attitude of the Chishti saints. The state after the fall of the Khilafat-i-Rashida, they thought, had become a symbol of materialism and had negated the true spirit of religion. To the mystics Islam stood for things nobler and purer than what the rulers conceived it to be. It had come not to establish empires which perpetuated differences between man and man but to bring them liberty and equality and give them the opportunity of self-realization. That ideal being relegated to the background, they turned their back on the state. They declined to serve class interests and direct the energies of a moral force into the parochial channels of dynastic ambitions.

Besides, there were legal objections to the service of the state. Imam Ghazzali thus explains the position: "In our

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1. See *Khair-u'l-Majalis*, ed. by K.A. Nizami, Introduction, 'Conflict with Muhammad bin Tughluq', pp. 49-58.

2. *Siyar-u'l-'Arifin*, p. 14.

times, the whole or almost the whole of the income of the Sultans is from prohibited sources. The permitted income is only *sadaqat*, *fay* and *ghanimah* and these have no existence these days. Only the *jiziyah* remains but it is realized through such cruel means that it does not continue to be permitted." Consequently all services paid from these sources of income were illegal. To these legal and historical reasons for abjuring contact with the state were added some pragmatic considerations. God and Mammon could not be served alike and simultaneously. Government service distracted a mystic from the single-minded pursuit of his ideal—'living for the Lord alone.' If a mystic associated with the rulers and the governing class, he was cut off from the main sphere of his activity—the masses. There can be no gift without a corresponding obligation. When one accepted a gift from any ruler, he could not refuse to fall in line with government policies. And the governing class ideologies contradicted mystic ideals of life. "There are two kinds of abuses among mystics," Shaikh Nasir-u'd-din Chiragh once told his audience, "—*muqallid* and *jirrat*. *Muqallid* is a mystic who has no spiritual guide. *Jirrat* is a mystic who asks people for money, who wraps himself in a costly cloak, puts on mystic cap and goes to kings and high officials."<sup>1</sup>

With some such notions the early Muslim mystics of India severed all contact with the rulers and the government of the day. When Sayyidi Maula sought Baba Farid's permission to leave Ajodhan and to go to Delhi, he half-heartedly permitted him saying: "Sayyidi! You go to Delhi. But keep in mind my one advice. Do not mix with kings and nobles. Take their visits to your house as calamities. Every *durwesh* who opens the door of association to kings and nobles is doomed."<sup>2</sup>

But the mystic teachers did not ask everyone of their *murids* to sever his relations with the state and eschew *shughl*

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1. *Khair-u'l-Majalis*, p. 80.

2. *Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi*, p. 209.

(government service). While there was no interdict against government service for ordinary *murids*, those who were asked to enrol disciples were definitely warned against consorting with rulers or accepting government service. The *Khilafat Namahs* given by Shaikh Nizam-u'd-din Auliya to his senior disciples definitely enjoined upon them :

می باید کہ تارک دنیا باشی ، بسوئے دنیا و ارباب دنیا  
مائل شوی ، و دیہ قبول نکنی ، و صلہ بادشا ہاں نگیری

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(You) ought to reject the world. Do not be inclined towards the world and the worldly men. Do not accept any village. And do not take any gift from kings).

If a senior disciple (*khalifa*) was not allowed to take up government, service what was he to do to earn his livelihood ? The medieval Muslim mystics believed in two means of livelihood : cultivating the fallow land or living on *futuh*, unasked for gifts. But *futuh* was preferred to cultivation because the latter brought the mystic into touch with the revenue officers. Elaborate rules were, however, laid down for the acceptance of *futuh* : (a) it became illegal if one aspired for it; (b) it could not be in the form of a guaranteed payment or immovable property; and (c) it had to be utilised and distributed as soon as it was received. It would be wrong to think that it was easy to live on *futuh*. Every one who decided to live on it had to undergo great hardships in the initial stages, and sometimes even subsequently. Shaikh Farid-u'd-din Ganj-i-Shakar's family and the inmates of his *jama'at khanah* had very often to starve. "It was an 'Eid day for us when we got a saltless dish of *pelu*"—they used to say. "In the days of Balban," Shaikh Nizam-u'd-din Auliya used to say in his later years when *futuh* flowed into his *khanqah* as continuously as the Jumma, "melons were sold at the rate of one *jital* per

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1. *Styar-u'l-Auliya*.



*maund* but very often the season passed without my tasting a slice. Two seers of bread could be had for one *jital*, but out of sheer poverty I was unable to purchase it in the market. My mother, sister and other dependents suffered with me. "Nizam-u'd-din ! We are the guests of God today !" نظام الدين ! ما

ام روز مهمان خدا ايم my mother used to say when we had no food left in the house."<sup>1</sup> Despite this poverty, he refused to accept the gift of a few villages offered by Sultan Jalal-u'd-din Khalji.

It is not possible to refer here to the large number of incidents that one finds in contemporary literature regarding the refusal of the early Muslim saints to accept government service, visit courts or accept jagirs. But three or four typical cases may be mentioned here to convey some idea of their attitude in the matter. (1) Iltutmish asked Shaikh Hasan to accept the post of *qazi* which the Shaikh declined. The Sultan insisted and the saint feigned to have become mad in order to evade his appointment. When Shaikh Qutb-u'd-din Bakhtiyar Kaki came to know of this, he remarked : "Shaikh Hasan is not mad, he is *dana* (wise)."<sup>2</sup> The saint afterwards came to be known as Shaikh Hasan *Dana*. (2) Balban requested Maulana Kamal-u'd-din Zahid, a teacher of Shaikh Nizam-u'd-din Auliya, to accept the office of the royal *imam* (leader of the congregational prayer). The Maulana sternly replied : "Our prayer is all that is left to us. Does the Sultun wish to take that too."<sup>3</sup> (3) Once Balban sent a tray of *tankas* to Shaikh Farid Ganj-i-Shakar who accepted the offer after considerable reluctance and ordered his disciple Maulana Badr-u'd-din Ishaq to distribute them at once among the needy and the poor. The sun had already set and it was getting dark but the Shaikh would not wait for the dawn. In obedience

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1. *Siyar-u'l-Auliya*.

2. *Rauza-i-Aqtab* p. 84.

3. *Siyar-u'l-Auliya*.

to his wishes Maulana Ishaq doled out all the money. Then he brought a candle just to see whether anything was still left. He found one coin which he put in his cap to give it to some poor fellow in the morning. Soon afterwards Shaikh Farid went to the mosque to lead the night ('*Isha*') prayer. Three times he began the prayer but could not finish it. There was something which disturbed his mind. The Maulana replied that he had given away all excepting one coin. He asked Maulana Ishaq if he had distributed all that money. The Shaikh angrily took back that coin and threw it away and then peacefully led the prayer. The author of *Jawahir-i-Faridi* says that throughout the night the Shaikh lamented why he had touched that coin.

With the advent of Muhammad bin Tughluq, a great crisis developed in the hitherto cool relations between the saints and the Sultanate. Muhammad bin Tughluq, with the zeal and impatience of an idealist, asked the saints of Delhi to migrate to Daulatabad and persuaded others to take up government service and move from place to place at his bidding. The saints believed that their areas of work were determined by their spiritual preceptors and that the Sultan had no right to interfere in it. The Sultan on his part claimed total allegiance of the people and sought to buttress his position by the claim that state and religion were twins.<sup>1</sup> In the tussle that ensued, the forces of the state succeeded in getting things done in its own way, but the government of Muhammad bin Tughluq forfeited the confidence and loyalty of the people the day his authority prevailed upon the wishes of the saints.

The reign of Muhammad bin Tughluq constitutes a turning point in the history of Islamic mysticism in India. It was after him that many of the saints abandoned the policy of keeping aloof from the state and when provincial governments came to be established the local saints accepted endowments from the founders of the provincial dynasties and jagirs became almost an integral part of many of the *khanqahs*.

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1. For details, see Nizami, *Salatin-i Dehli Kay Mazhabi Rujhanat* p. 333 et seq; *Comprehensive History of India*, Vol. V, pp. 491-498.

The mystics had their own views about the government and their own assessment of the role of rulers. They believed that a government, in its ultimate analysis, reflected the basic strength and weakness of a people. People get the government they deserve. "If a tyrant is placed as a ruler over your head," a great mystic once told his audience, "do not curse him. Repent for your sins and mend your ways."<sup>1</sup> This, however, does not mean that they exonerated the rulers of all responsibility in this respect. Usually they advised the Sultans indirectly but if circumstances so demanded, they did not hesitate in giving them a blunt advice and in warning them against their misdeeds. Shaikh Nizam-u'd-din Auliya told Mubarak Khalji that he would be questioned about his company on the Day of Judgement.<sup>2</sup> Shaikh Nasir-u'd-din Chiragh told Muhammad bin Tughluq to get rid of his beastly anger. But occasions for such direct admonitions were few and far between. Generally they advised the rulers and the governing classes in indirect ways, guised in stories and fables, wrapped in traditions of the Prophet and hidden in maxims of saints. The following tradition of the Prophet was often quoted to bring home to them their responsibilities: "If in any kingdom an old woman goes to bed hungry, the ruler shall be held responsible for this on the Day of Judgement."

How the medieval Muslim mystics looked at the history of the Sultanate and the role of the Sultans? Only two instances would suffice. In his own peculiar way Shaikh Nizam-u'd-din Auliya one day told his audience that what led to the salvation of Iltutmish was his construction of the Hauz-i Shamsi<sup>3</sup>—the famous water—reservoir of Delhi. Neither the ceaseless military campaigns of the founder of the Delhi Sultanate which some would be inclined to interpret in terms of religion, nor his constant vigils and continuous penitences which theologians would have considered

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1. *Durar-i-Nizami* (MS).
  2. *Siyar-u'l-Auliya* p. 558.
  3. *Fawa'id-u'l-Fu'ad*, p. 119.

eyes a medieval mystic. It was an act of public welfare — a *ta'at-i-muta'addi*, which won their approbation. There can be enough for his salvation, had any real significance in the no better comment on the spirit of Khalji Imperialism than the following verse which Amir Khusrau wrote in his elegy on the death 'Ala-u'd-din Khalji :<sup>1</sup>

چرا باید گرفت آن کشور و شهر  
کزان ندهند بیش از چهار گز بهر

(Why conquer so many realms and cities when you cannot get more than four yards of land after your death!)

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1. *Duwal Rani Khizr Khan*, Introduction p. 57.

## ***Mystic Ideas of Iran and their Impact on Sufi Thought and Traditions in India\****

Mysticism, it is said, has no genealogy. It is the eternal quest of man to have direct experience of the Ultimate Reality. The terms *ma'arifat*, *gnosis*, *bhakti* indicate the same basic urge of the finite to approach the Infinite. There is hardly any language, religion or country where mystical attitude has not developed. Morally sensitive souls have always turned to mystic experience either as a reaction against the enervating pursuits of material life or as an escape from the political hysteria of the period. Sometimes the reasons are purely personal and subjective. Dissatisfied with the world around him, one turns to spiritual culture for the solace of his own soul.

The mystical movement in Islam has, however, some peculiar features which distinguish it from similar trends in other religions. First, as Sir Hamilton Gibb has remarked, the history of popular religion in Islam runs parallel to the

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\*Dr. M. ISHAQUE MEMORIAL LECTURE delivered at Calcutta on September 26, 1981.

history of the mystical movement. Secondly, it was through the mystic channel that dynamic and progressive forces entered the structure of Islam and facilitated its adjustment with new situations and circumstances. Thirdly, the mystic attitude in Islam assumed the shape of collective struggle for the spiritual and moral uplift of society; and orders (*silsilahs*) came to be organized in different parts of the Muslim world. While in other religions the mystic attitude was basically ego-centric, it assumed the shape of a movement in Islamic history.

Before discussing the impact of the Sufi tradition of Iran on the mystic thought and institutions of India, it is necessary to have a synoptic over-view of the main stages of ideological and institutional development in the history of Islamic mysticism so that the discussion proceeds in its proper historical framework.

Apart from everything else, the history of the Islamic mystic movement is a long and chequered story of reactions to certain developments in Muslim society and polity. The rise of the Omayyads—which in a way meant the substitution of *khilafat* by *malukiyat*—found its reaction in the attitude of mystics like Imam Hasan Basri, Malik b. Dinar, and Ibrahim b. Adham. Nicholson designates them as 'Quietists' because they did not believe in mass contact or in dissemination of their ideas through books or brochures. Most of them belonged to Kufa or Basra—the two most important military cantonments of the Omayyads. Their souls were perturbed at the ills of individual and collective life and they were all the time busy in *tauba* (repentance). Fear of God, more than His love, animated their souls. They gave a wide berth to the government of the day and declared that the path of religion and State was no longer the same. Later on, when the Abbasid Caliph Mamun established at Baghdad an Academy of Sciences, known as *Baitul-Hikma*, and new philosophic trends developed under the influence of Greek philosophy, Islamic theology became the subject of endless, and often meaningless, philosophic disquisitions which froze the heat of spiritual life.

The Sufis reacted to this situation by developing the cult of love or 'cosmic emotion' as an antidote to over-intellectualism. They said that intellect uninspired by love and uncontrolled by faith in ethical principles was barren and unproductive. They therefore declared :

بگذر از عقل و بیاویز به موج یم عشق  
که درین جوئے تنگ مایه گهر پیدا نیست

(Give up (your faith in) intellect and throw yourself in the Ocean of Love.

The shallow river (of intellect) is devoid of pearls.)

Junaid Baghdadi, Zunun Misri, Bayazid Bistami and other Sufi saints of this period represent a revolt against over-intellectualism. At a later stage of development when juristic interests led to hair-splitting controversies and Muslim scholars emphasized the letter of the law to the utter disregard of the spirit of religion, the Sufis of the period preached interiorization of religious rites and a return to the realm of spirit as a means for the enrichment of intuitive capacities. They asked people :

در کنز و هدایه نتوان دید خدا را  
آئینه دل بین که کتابے به ازین نیست

(You cannot see God in (the law-books) *Kanz* and *Hidayah*.

Look into the mirror of your heart for there is no book better than this.)

The last and the most important development in the history of Islamic mysticism was the organization of orders (*silsilahs*).

Long before the Mongols carried sword and fire into flourishing centres of Muslim culture, moral degeneration and spiritual impoverishment had honeycombed the Muslim society. The Sufis met the situation by organizing *silsilahs*, demarcating areas of activity as their *walayats*, and transforming mystical activity into a movement for the moral and spiritual regeneration of society. To use Toynbee's terminology, it was the period of 'schism in the soul' and the Sufis responded to it by patching up the inward spiritual rift and by releasing fresh energy to resuscitate a disintegrating society.

Considered from the point of view of the development of mystic ideology, the earliest group of mystics made no contribution to mystical thought. They neither wrote books nor did they strive to propagate their views. However, the generation that followed gave up its posture of silence and started compiling small brochures which dealt with specific themes of spiritual culture. As deeper analysis of some mystic experiences became necessary, terms were coined to communicate subtle mystic concepts. This terminology raised mysticism to a definite discipline and provided a medium for the communication of ideas. The next stage came when the ideas expressed in brochures were consolidated in big compendiums and the works of Qushairi, Ghazzali and others made mysticism a discipline with all its perimeters and objectives clearly defined and illustrated. Barring the first phase, Iran played an important role in the development and growth of mystic ideology and institutions. In fact the soil of Iran with its long tradition of metaphysical speculation and the deeply amorous aroma of the land became a fertile ground for the development of 'cosmic emotion' which was the essence of the mystic experience. In the early stages of its development, the Muslim mystical movement had a deep imprint of Arab influence but as the movement spread to non-Arab lands, Iranian traditions came to determine its hue and colour. It was in Iran that Muslim mystical movement developed its metaphysical and ideological content. What was a simple cult of devotion to God under the Arabs, developed a whole paraphernalia of spiritual concepts, imageries and symbols under Iranian



influence. The vast uncharted ocean of mystic experience was explored through the creative ego of the soul; and a delicately marked configuration of *hal* (state) and *maqam* (station) unfolded a whole universe of inner experience.

A few preliminary observations may be made in this context :

1. The word Iran as used here has cultural *not* political connotation. It denotes areas or regions where Persian language was spoken.

2. The mystic traditions were articulated and broadcast by Iran not in prose but in verse. While Arabic literature on mysticism was in prose, the Iranian literature was in verse. Kroeber's remark that "prose may or may not be literature, with poetry the only question is whether it is great, mediocre or ineffectual literature...what peoples conceive as the great or golden ages of their literature are regularly strong in poetry"<sup>1</sup> is not without truth. The era of mystic poetry in Iran was in fact the golden age, of Persian literature. It had tremendous power of emotional appeal and made Persian poetry one of the best in world literature. The Persian mystic poets from Abu Sa'id Abul Khayr to 'Abdur Rahman Jami influenced the nerve of mystic thought in India. But no mystic poet after Jami had any impact on Indian mind. The fact was that the sufi tradition in Iran got decimated after Jami. Its meta-physical part attracted the philosophers, while its terminology was adopted by poets who lacked the fire and fervour of mystic experience. The *elan* of the mystic movement was lost.

3. The mystic movement gathered momentum when Arabic classics were translated into Persian and were made available to Muslim intelligentsia. From the purely ideological point of view, the influence may be traced from Ghazzali's *Kimīya-i-Sa'adat* and Hajweri's *Kashf-ul-Mahjub* to Mahmud Shabistari's *Gulshan-i-Raz* and Jami's *Lawa'ih*. Indo-Muslim

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1. *Configurations of Culture Growth*, p. 454.

mystical thought rotated round these works for centuries.' It is however significant that ideas contained in these classics became a force only when they were supported by the Persian poetry.

4. Many of the pioneer saints who established and popularised different spiritual orders in India, either came from Iran or had spent considerable time in the company of the mystic teachers of Iran. So their thought had been nurtured in Iranian traditions and when they worked out mystic principles in the Indian milieu they consciously or unconsciously gave expression to Persian ideas.

5. Lyricism and love, aestheticism and speculation have been inalienable features of the intellectual activity of Iran. These trends paved the way for the development of cosmic emotion (*'ishq*) and wove the essential features of mystic soul-movement into the texture of Iranian thought. Since mystic experiences could not be expressed in plain language, the mystic poets adopted the language of symbols. Symbolism thus became the medium for the communication of mystic ideas. Abu Sa'id Abul Khayr, Sana'i, 'Attar and Rumi were the greatest of the symbolists among the poets of Iran. In the fourteenth century, Hafiz laid the foundation of impressionism in Persian poetry. In India Iqbal rejected the impressionist school and revived the "symbolist traditions with magnificent results."<sup>1</sup> The Sufi tradition in India was alternately under the spell of symbolist and impressionist trends of Iran. However, the most abiding influence was that of the symbolists.

6. Apart from propounding the doctrines of mysticism — love of God and interiorization of religious rites — the mystics instructed the common folk on what is termed as generosity add manliness (*futuwwat*).<sup>2</sup> In mystic poetry a strong

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1. Sa'id Naficy in *A History of Muslim Philosophy*, II, p. 1052.

2. *A History of Muslim Philosophy*, p. 1049. Agha Sai'd Naficy writes: "Many books were produced on this subject in Arabic and Persian and these have been known as books of generosity and manliness (*Fatuwwat Nameh*).

trend of *futuwwat* is discernible, particularly in the verses of 'Iraqi. The spirit of 'Iraqi's poetry is reflected in the verses of Khusrau, 'Urfi and Iqbal.

7. If the course of different streams of thought in Iran is closely followed it would appear that there has been considerable cycling and recycling of ideas between Iran and India. India is the cradle of pantheistic philosophy and the *Upanishads* contain the earliest exposition of these ideas. When Islam reached Khorasan and Transoxiana, the religious atmosphere was saturated with Buddhist and Hindu ideas. It was but inevitable that some of these ideas influenced the Iranian mind. The *Upanishads* proclaims *Tattvam asi* (Thou art thou) and the idea finds its echo in Bayazid. Hajweri has given an account of 12 schools of mystic thought which flourished during the eleventh century of the Christian era<sup>1</sup>. An analysis of the thought content of these *garohs* reveals the impact of Indian ideas — concepts like *fana*, *baqa*, *hulul* etc. are in explicable except in the context of Hindu and Buddhist conceptual framework. Von Kremer has pointed out the parallels between the practices of Indian Yogis and Muslim Sufis. Some of the Iranian mystical ideas which reached India during the medieval period had in fact originated in India and were cycled back to India under Islamic rubrics.

With these preliminary observations we may turn to individual poets and writers of Iran who made an impact on Indian mystic thought. In fact it was the Persian poet who made the most abiding impact on the Sufi mind in India. Where logic or argument was ineffective, a single verse was enough to clinch the issue and satisfy the most inquisitive mind.

The poetical works of Shaikh Abu Sa'id Abul Khayr (337-440/967-1049), Khwaja 'Abdullah Ansari (396-481/1006-1088), Sana'i (437-525/1046-1131), Ahmad Jam (ob. 537/1142), Nizami Ganjavi (534-605/1141-1209), 'Attar (ob. 627/1229), Shaikh Saifuddin Bakharzi (ob. 658/1259), Rumi (604-672/

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1. *Kashf al-Mahjub*, tr. Nicholson, p. 150 *et seq.*

1208-1273), 'Iraqi (ob. 688/1289), Sa'di (610-691/1213-1232), Shaikh Auhaduddin Kirmani (ob. 697/1298), Hafiz (726-792/1325-1389) and Jami (817-898/1414-1482) supplied a warm fund of emotions to Indian Sufis, and provided those moral and ethical ideas which became *elan* of the mystic movement in India. The mystic literature produced in India during the last eight hundred years or so is replete with extracts from the works of these poets. Many of their verses have been accepted as epitomes of ideal behaviour and have assumed the significance of proverbs based on unimpeachable human experience.

Since it is not possible within the range of a single paper to go into detailed discussion of the impact of every one of these mystic poets, the influence of Shaikh Abu Sa'id, the earliest mystic poet may be indicated here and that too on one of the earliest and most important saints of medieval India, Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya.

Shaikh Abu Sa'id Abul Khayr captured the imagination of the Indian sufis by his quatrains<sup>1</sup> vibrating with cosmic emotions. Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya admired his vision, his sincerity of purpose, his vast human sympathies and looked to him for inspiration in many matters concerning mystic ideals and practices. His impact is particularly discernible in the following teachings of the Shaikh :

1. Social Relationship.
2. Psychological Approach to the problem of human reform.
3. Vast perspective of love towards all living beings, man and animal.

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1. Jan Rypka has doubted the authenticity of Shaikh Abu Sa'id's quatrains on the basis of a remark in *Asrar-ut-Tawhid (History of Iranian Literature, p. 234)*. The matter needs careful examination. The fact can hardly be ignored that these quatrains (*rubai's*) were attributed to Shaikh Abu Sa'id in the most well-informed mystic circles of Delhi.

4. Emphasis on 'cosmic emotion' in preference to intellectual pursuits.
5. Superiority of moral and ethical life over academic achievement.
6. Value of expenditure on works of public welfare.
7. Determinism and Free Will.

Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya propounded and practised the principle that real human happiness lay in 'forgiveness' not revenge. The source of his inspiration was Shaikh Abu Sa'id whose verses he always cited in support of his view :

هر که ما را رنجه دارد راحتش بسیار باد  
 هر که ما را یار نبو ایزد او را یار باد  
 هر که اندر راه ما خار می نهد از دشمنی  
 هر گلی که باغ عمرش بشگفتد بے خار باد

(He who nurses ill will against me may his joys (in life) increase ;

He who is not my friend—may God be his friend !

He who puts thorn in my way on account of enmity  
 May every flower that blossoms in the garden of his life be without thorns.)

From Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya to Shah Kalimullah of Delhi these verses have conditioned the morality of the Chishti saints and have determined their ideals of social relationship.<sup>1</sup>

Strikingly in consonance with the modern psychological concepts, Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya refers to عزیمت و خطرہ (cognition, feeling, volition) as the processes which precede human action. According to him it is at the stage of

1. *Fawa'id-ul-Fu'ad*, Lahore ed. 1966, p. 148 ; *Durar-i Nizami* (MS); *Malfuzat-i-Shah Mina*, Muraqqa-i 'Alam Press Hardoi, p. 57 ; *Maktubat-i-Kalimi*, Delhi, 1351 A.D., p. 28.

cognition that efforts should be made to reform human responses. The source of this thought was Shaikh Abu Sa'id Abul Khayr to whose incidents of life he refers to illustrate his point of view.<sup>1</sup> The significance of this view may be gauged from the fact that the entire structure of mystic education was based on the principle that cognition influenced is action controlled. Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya admired the Shaikh's attitude of kindness and benevolence towards all living beings. One day Shaikh Abu Sa'id saw a man beating his bull and cried out as if he himself was being flogged.<sup>2</sup>

Though a great scholar himself, Shaikh Abu Sa'id Abul Khayr put aside all his books when he adopted the mystic way of life. Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya mentioned this to his audience with tears in his eyes and admired the great saint's exclusive devotion to Him.<sup>3</sup> Shah Niaz Ahmad of Bareilly expressed the same feelings when he said :

جہی جا کے مکتب عشق میں سبق مقام فنا لیا  
جو کچھ لکھا پڑھا تھا نیاز نے سو وہ صاف دل سے بہلادیا

Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya one day explained to his audience the superiority of a moral personality over an intellectual prodigy. He narrated a story to the following effect :

One day Bu 'Ali Sina came to see Shaikh 'Abu Sa'id Abul Khayr. While leaving the hospice Bu Ali took a Sufi aside and requested him to report to him whatever the Shaikh observed about him (after he had left). The Shaikh said nothing...the Sufi got impatient and put a direct question to him one day : "What type of man is Bu 'Ali Sina?" The Shaikh replied: "He is a philosopher, a physician and a man of vast learning, but he is devoid

1. *Fawa'id-ul Fu'ad* p. 29.

2. *Fawa'id-ul Fu'ad*, p. 131.

3. *Fawa'id-ul Fu'ad*, pp. 157.

of moral qualities (مکارم اخلاق)." The Sufi reported this to Bu 'Ali Sina who wrote to Shaikh Abu Sa'id that he had written many books on ethics. 'How do you say that I don't have مکارم اخلاق?' The saint smiled at this and said :

من نه گفته ام که بو علی مکارم اخلاق نداند بل گفته ام  
که ندارد

(I did not say that Bu Ali does not know مکارم اخلاق ; I said he does n't possess them).<sup>1</sup>

Explaining the spirit of determinism, Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya narrated an incident from Shaikh Abu Sa'id's life. One day the Shaikh told his audience that the source of all action—whether good or bad—was God. Man was helpless. A vagabond who heard this sermon one day gave a blow at the back of the saint. As soon as he turned back to see what the matter was the man quietly said ;

شمانه می گوئید که هر خیر و شر که می رسد از نجا است ؟

(Do not you say that whatever good or bad comes, comes from Him ?)

The Shaikh promptly replied :

آری همچنین است ، ولی می ینم که کدام بدبخت را  
نامزد این کار کرده اند

(Yes. It is as I have said, but I want to know who the accursed one has been chosen to do this job.<sup>2</sup>)

1. *Fawa'id-ul Fu'ad*, pp. 322-323.

2. *Fawa'id-ul Fu'ad*, pp. 420-421.

Round this story the Shaikh wove his ideas about determinism and free will. Incidents of Shaikh Abu Sa'id's life when narrated along with his quatrains deeply moved the audience.

Khwaja 'Abdullah Ansari was another great impact on the mystic ideals of the saints of Delhi, Nagaur, Maner etc. The contemporary literature refers to him as *Pir-i-Hari*.<sup>1</sup> His *risalahs* which are in rhymed prose (*nasr-i-musajja*) sowed the seed of later mystical didactic epic poems, while his quatrains propagated mystic concepts in a very effective manner. The Khwaja gave a revolutionary definition of religious devotion. He believed that the religious ideal could not be reached through countless genuflexions of prayer or endless fasts. The path of spiritual progress lay through service to mankind. Fasts and prayers were acts of devotion which even an old widow could perform. The real mission of a mystic's life should be to strive for the welfare of His creation. The Indian Sufis frequently quoted this view in their mystic gatherings<sup>2</sup> in order to emphasize upon the mind of their disciples the spiritual significance of social work. Shaikh Mu'in-u'd-din Chishti's definition of devotion طاعب :

در ماندگان را فریاد رسیدن و حاجت یسچارگان روا  
کردن و گرمندگان را سیر گردانیدن

1. *Fawa'id-ul-Fu'ad*, p. 354.

In *Saroor-u's-Sudur* he is referred to as *Pir Ustad-i Hari*.

2. Shaikh Hamiduddin Sufi, a distinguished disciple of Shaikh Mu'inuddin Chishti of Ajmer, thus quotes him :

وهم پیر استاد هری گفته است نماز گزاردن کار بیوه زنان است  
و روزه داشتن حرفه نان است، حج کردن کار بیکاران دلی  
در یاب که کار آنست



(Providing redress to the destitute, fulfilling the needs of the downtrodden and feeding the poor,)

is, in fact, an elaboration of the same spirit which inspired the remark of *Pir-i-Hari*.

Khwaja 'Abdullah's criticism of miracles and miracle-mongers was approvingly cited at the Chishti mystic centres. The *Saroor-us-Sudur* says :

پیر استاد هری گفته است علیہ الرحمۃ کرامت فروختن  
سگی ست ، و کرامت خریدن خری ست ، پیری بیان کردن  
معلمی ست ، سخن از غیب گفتن منجم است .

Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya was so deeply inspired by his views that he prefaced one of his mystic discourses by a reference to his remark that chastity in youth and repentance in old age was the ideal way of life.<sup>1</sup>

Shah Mina of Lucknow (ob. 870/1065) quoted his view about the various types of *faqr* اضطراری و اختیاری and drew inspiration from them<sup>2</sup> in his life of poverty and self-abnegation.

An early Persian poet who influenced Indian mystics at the emotional level was Shaikh Ahmad Jam. His verses were recited in the *sama'* meetings of Delhi. Shaikh Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki was so overpowered by mystic emotions when he heard the *qawwals* recite the following verse of Ahmad Jam that he got it repeated continuously day in and day out and eventually breathed his last while listening to it :<sup>3</sup>

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*Saroor-us-Sudur* (MS) ; See also *Durar-i Nizami* (MS) ; *Ma'din-ul Ma'an*, Bihar, 1301 A.H., Vol. II, p. 418.

1. *Siyar-ul-Auliya*, p. 46.
2. *Fawa'id-ul-Fu'ad*, p. 354.
3. *Mal'uzat-i-Shah Mina*, p. 150.
4. *Akbar-ul-Akhyar*, p. 25.

کشتگان خنجر تسلیم را  
 هر زمان از غیب جانے دیگر است

(To the victims of the dagger of submission.

There comes a new life at every moment from unseen source.)

Hasan Dihlavi composed verses in the same rhyme and metre and said.<sup>1</sup>

جان بدین يك بیت داد است آن بزرگ  
 آرے آن گوهر ز کانے دیگر است

The following verses in the poem echo Ahmad Jam's ideas:

دوزخ اندر راه مشتاقان تو  
 هر شرارے بوستانے دیگر است  
 عالمے پرشد ز خاموشی من  
 بے زبانان را زبانے دیگر است

Nizami of Ganja (modern Kirovabad) created a stir in mystic circles by the profundity of his ethical and philosophical concepts. His *Khamsa* is not merely a masterpiece of literary excellence, it combines genuine mystic emotions with sublime ideas. The *Khamsawas* frequently read at Multan during the time of Balban.<sup>2</sup> Amir Khusrau imitated him in the literary sphere, but in the mystic circles he was admired for his intensely religious feelings, his lofty ethical ideals and his restraint in the expression of inner emotional states. While advising his disciples to exercise great control in the expression of their

1. *Diwan-i-Hasan Sijzi*, Hyderabad ed., pp. 76-77.

2. Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi*, p. 67.

emotional states, Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya recited the following verse of Nizami :<sup>1</sup>

نظامی این چه اسرار است کز خاطر عیاں کردن  
کسے سرش نمی داند زبان در کش زبان در کش

Shaikh Farid was so deeply excited by this verse that once he went on reciting it throughout the whole day and even at night and his face revealed the inner emotional storm that shook his whole being.<sup>2</sup>

The birth of the mystic poetry at Ghaznin was one of the most significant events in the history of Islamic mysticism. What people had refused to accept in prose, they readily accepted in verse. Since it was not always possible to express one's mystic experiences in a language intelligible to all, the mystics adopted the medium of symbols, parables, allegories and similes to convey abstruse mystic concepts. The four most outstanding mystic poets whose influence on Indian mind was the deepest were Sana'i, 'Attar Sa'di and Rumi. Under their influence mystic ideas got such currency that every mystic centre, *khanqah*, *jama'at* *khanah*, *zawiyah*, *ribat* and *daerah* in India reverberated with sufi songs.

Sana'i presented mysticism as a philosophy of life. In India his *diwan* was not merely read at the courts of the princes,<sup>3</sup> it was a popular study in the *khanqahs* of Delhi, Gulbarga, Multan, Pandua and Maner. Even a cursory glance at the pages of *Siyar-ul-Auliya* would show that Sanai's verses were quoted almost on every matter. Shaikh Nasiruddin Chiragh of Delhi often narrated incident of his life<sup>4</sup> and admired his spiritual excellence. The following verse of Sana'i in which he has invited people lost in the ephemeral glory and glamour of

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1. *Fawa'id-ul-Fu'ad*, p. 174; *Durar-i-Nizami* (MS).

2. *Siyar-ul-Auliya*, p. 503.

3. Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi*, p. 67.

4. *Khair-ul-Majalis*, pp. 72, 73, 146.

the political world to turn to the realm of spirit, was very pathetically recited by him :<sup>1</sup>

اے کہ شنیدی صفت روم و چین  
خیز و بیا ملک سنائی بہ یں

(Oh you who have listened about the glories of Rum and China, get up and behold the realm of Sana'i.)

Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya often recited his following couplets :<sup>2</sup>

یش منما جمال جہاں افروز  
چون نمودی برو سپند بسوز  
آن جمال تو چیست مستی تو

One day he quoted Shaikh Saifuddin Bakharzi who used to say that it was the following verse of San'ai that made him a real Muslim :<sup>3</sup>

بر سر طور هوا طنبور شہوت میزنی  
عشق مرد لن ترانی را بدین خواری مجو

(You blow the lute of your sex impulse from the top of mount Sinai of desire ;

Do not seek the Love of Moses with this self-abasement.)

To bring home to his audience the greatness of Sana'i, Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya quoted Shaikh Bakharzi who used to say :<sup>4</sup>

1. *Khair-ul-Majalis*, pp. 143-44 ; *Durar-i-Nizami* (MS).

2. *Fawa'id-ul-Fu'ad*, p. 54; *Durar-i-Nizami* (MS).

3. *Fawa'id-ul-Fu'ad*, p. 428; *Siyar-ul-Auliya*, p. 503; *Durar-i-Nizami* (MS).

4. *Fawa'id-ul-Fu'ad*, p. 429; *Siyar-ul-Auliya*, p. 503.

اے کاش مرا باد آنجا برد کہ خاک سناٹی است یا خاک  
او بیارد کہ من آنرا سرمہ کنم

From the time of Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya to the days of Dr. Mohammad Iqbal, Sana'i has been a powerful influence on Indo-Muslim religious thought. When Iqbal declared :

خدا کے پاک بندوں کو حکومت میں غلامی میں  
زرہ کوئی اگر محفوظ رکھتی ہے تو استغنا

he was inspired by Sana'i, and when he said :

ندا آئی کہ آشوب قیامت سے بہ کیا کم ہے  
گرفتہ چینیاں احرام و مکی خفته در بطحاء

he was speaking Sanai's language.

Unlike many contemporary mystics, Sana'i did not believe in knowledge being *حجاب اکبر* (big curtain that prevented the vision of Reality). But he rejected over-intellectualism and like Rumi after him defined the purpose of *'ilm*. His verses on *'Ilm* were approvingly quoted in Chishti *khanqahs* :<sup>1</sup>

علم رہ جانب الہ برد  
جہل رہ سوئے نفس و جاء برد  
جان بے علم تن بمیز اند  
شاخ بے برگ میوہ گیر اند  
حکم از علم نیک ہے گردد  
سنگ بے اصل لعل کے گردد

1. *Siyar-ul Auliya*, p. 539.

علم داں خاصہ خدا آمد  
 علم خوان شرح مصطفیٰ آمد  
 کشت بے آب بار و بر ندمد  
 تخم بے مغز بس ثمر ندمد  
 درد بے علم تخم در شور است  
 علم بے درد سنگ مرگور است  
 علم کز بهر حشمت آموزی  
 نیست حز رنج و محنت روزی

Khwaja Farid u'd din 'Attar was a mystic teacher par excellence. His *Mantiq-ut-Tayr* in verse and *Tazkirat-ul-Auliya* in prose were popular studies in medieval India.<sup>1</sup> 'Auft, a contemporary, says :

عطر فضل او دد اقطار آفاق ناشر است

While it was *Tazkirat-ul Auliya* through which the life and thought of early mystic teachers became known to the mystic minded people in India, the *Mantiq-ut-Tayr* provided an interesting excursion into the realm of spirit. His *Pand Namah* was for centuries included in the syllabus of *madrasahs*. The following verse of 'Attar :

کفر کافر را و دین دیندار را  
 ذرہ دردی دل عطار را

was inscribed on the temples of Kashmir<sup>2</sup> and was recited in the *khanqahs* of Delhi as veritable expression of a deep cosmopolitan spirit.

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1. Derogatory views attributed to Syed Muhammad Gisu Daraz about 'Attar & Rumi appear to be interpolations. *Maktubat*, Hyderabad, 1362 A.H., p. 22.
  2. *Lubab-ul-Albab*, II p. 337.

<sup>1</sup>Sa'di's poetry and his two classical works—*Gulistan* and *Bustan* — were not only popular studies in mystic circles but were taught in Indian *madrasahs*. Browne's views about Sa'di that his was a Machiavellian ethics are based on gross misunderstanding of the nature and spirit of Sa'di's work.<sup>2</sup> Sa'di was looked upon in India as a great mystic. He was invited by Prince Muhammad who wanted to set up at Multan a big *khanqah* for him. Shaikh Nasir-u'd-din Chiragh once said that Amir Khusrau and Amir Hasan both tried to emulate Sa'di but did not succeed because whatever Sa'di has written is based on his inner spiritual experience<sup>3</sup> and is therefore more powerful. Nevertheless it is a fact that both Khusrau and Hasan were deeply inspired by Sa'di. Khusrau admits :

خسرو سر مست اندر ساغر معنی بریخت  
شیره خمخانا سعدی که در شیراز بود

And Hasan's proud privilege was that he came to be called *Sa'di-i-Hind*<sup>1</sup>. The mystic circles of Nagaur were particularly impressed by Sa'di. Shaikh Hamid-u'd-din Nagauri once told his audience : "I have heard from a *durwesh* that during the closing years of his life Shaikh Sa'di lived in seclusion at the mausoleum of Shaikh 'Abdullah Khafif. Every day he recited twelve thousand times the *Kalima* and finished the Qur'an once daily. He did not talk much to the visitors. He advised them only this much : "Offer five time prayers and whatever much or less, God has given you share it with the needy and the poor. If you do that then wherever you are, you can proceed from there on the path to God."<sup>2</sup> Sa'di had learnt from his spiritual mentor that real mysticism lay in rejecting both egoism and arrogance. Innumerable works of Indian Sufis have

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1. Abul Fazl's inscription for a temple of Kashmir contains this verse. Blochmann, *A'in-i-Akhari*. p. LV.
  2. *Literary History of Persia*, Vol. II, p. 526.
  3. *Khair-ul-Majalis*, p. 143.
  4. Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi*, p. 360.
  5. *Saroor-us-Sudur*, (MS).

quoted his verses as the real ideal of mystic discipline :

مرا پیر دانا ے فرخ شہاب  
دو اندرز فرمود بر روئے آب  
یکی آنکہ بر خویش خود بین مباش  
دگر آنکہ بر غیر بد بین مباش

Fakhr-u'd-din Iraqi's verses have for centuries been recited in Indian *khanqahs*. His *Lama'at* captured the imagination of intellectuals, his *diwan* fascinated the mystics. His *Ushshaq Namah* traverses the same path of cosmic emotions which Rumi has done with greater artistic deftness. His concept of خودی (ego) and his emphasis on self-respect, resignation and contentment inspired many mystics. His ideas find an echo in the verses of Khusrau, Urfi and Iqbal. 'Iraqi says :

اگر تو زندگی خواہی دل از جان و جہاں بگسل  
نیابی زندگی تا تو بھر این و آن میری  
مقام تو و رائے عرش از دون ہمتی خواہی  
کہ چوں دوناں دریں عالم ز بھر یک دوناں میری

Khusrau says :

مرو کرد ہر در کہ نازت دہند  
در کعبہ زن تا امانت دہند  
ضامن روزی تو روزی رساں  
دیدہ کور بسوئے جہاں

Again :

لیکن نبود حیات جاوید  
تا سر نکش بہ ماہ و خورشید



گر مرد همتی ز مروت نشان بخواه  
صد جا شهید شودیت از دشمنان مخواه

“Urfi’s famous verses :

خاک از فلک مخواه و مراد از زمین مجو  
ماه از زمین مجو و دعا از آسمان مخواه

and Iqbal’s poem

قطر تے کو بر فلک بندد نظر  
ہست می گردد ز احسان دگر  
رزق خویش از نعمت دیگر مجو  
موج آب از چشمہ خاور مجو

reflect deep impact of ‘Iraqi’s thought. Iqbal was, in particular, deeply impressed by a *risalah* of Iraqi which deals with Time and Space <sup>1</sup> and which contains striking modern concepts. He interpreted, remarks Iqbal, “his spiritual experience of time and space in an age which had no idea of the theories and concepts of modern Mathematics and Physics”.<sup>2</sup>

With Jalal-u’d-din Rumi’s *Masnavi*, which provides a picture gallery of mystic ideas and images, the impact of Iranian mystic traditions touches its highest watermark. No mystic writer before or after him had succeeded in portraying soul-movement and its subtle inexpressible experiences with such perception and intellectual vigour. He believed in the creative urge of the self and visualized a long and unending process of

1. *A Plea for Deeper Study of the Muslim Scientists*, Oriental Conference, Lahore Session, 1928.
2. *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, p. 137.

its evolution and growth. The earliest reference to *Masnavi* is found in the *Khair-ul-Majalis*, conversations of Shaikh Nasir-u'd-din Chiragh of Delhi.<sup>1</sup> Thereafter there is hardly any mystic writer who does not quote him. It is significant that Rumi has selected many stories of Indian origin in his *masnawi* and there are many words in it which are common to Persian and Hindi, and Arabic and Hindi. During the time of Shahjahan, 'Abdul Latif 'Abbasi (ob. 1048/1638) who had prepared also a commentary on *Hadiqa*, compiled a glossary of the *masnawi*, entitled *Lata'if-ul-Lughat* in which he identified those words in the *masnawi* which are common to Persian and Hindi as also those which are common to Arabic and Hindi.<sup>3</sup>

Rumi prepared the Sufi mind in India to receive Ibn 'Arabi's pantheistic ideas. He had a philosophy of life, a vision of moral and spiritual needs of man and society, a fine spiritual sensibility and a powerful imagination which made his delineation of delicate spiritual experiences a magical performance. In India the mystics were so enamoured of the *masnawi* that they taught it to their disciples, heard it in their audition parties and expounded mystic ideas to their audience in the light of the anecdotes given in *masnawi*. They drew inspiration from Rumi's moral and ethical ideals and admired his cult of 'ishq, but an integrated approach to his work on which could be based integration of individual personality and regeneration of human society was still far off. It was left to Iqbal to turn to Rumi for inspiration and guidance for this purpose. Iqbal's philosophy—his concept of *khudi*, his ideal of human excellence, his spiritual goals—were all determined by Rumi. If Iqbal could proudly call himself a 'disciple of Rumi', Rumi could also be proud of being 'Iqbal's spiritual mentor.' None in India throughout the centuries has been so deeply inspired by the *masnawi* as Iqbal was and no one has fathomed the depths of Rumi's thought as Iqbal did. Emotionally speaking Indian Sufis have always been in

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1. *Khair-ul-Majalis*, p. 163.

2. MSS, I.O. No. 1091-1095.

the domain of Rumi. A number of commentaries were compiled, particularly noteworthy being those of Muhammad Afzal Allahabadi, Wali Muhammad, Maulana 'Abdul 'Ali Bahrul 'Ulum, Muhammad Razi, Mirza Muhammad Nazir 'Arshi, Maulana Ahmad Husain Kanpuri and Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanvi. It was however Iqbal who gave a new interpretation to Rumi's *masnavi* and found in him a real guide in the arduous task of resurrecting the individual and the community. Iqbal saw Rumi in his imaginary excursion to the other world addressing him as *zinda rud* (living stream).<sup>1</sup>

Hafiz's literary reputation reached India during his life time and Bengal was in direct contact with him :

شکر شکن شوند همه طوطیان هند  
زیں قند پارسی کہ به بنگالہ میرود

Hafiz's poetry represents the quintessence of the romantic fervour of Iran—his verses, chiselled linguistically and charged emotionally, took the contemporary Persian speaking world by storm. In India both the literati and the mystics found in his verses something which appealed to their mystic or literary tastes. Looked upon as *لسان الغیب* (the tongue of secrets), people turned to his work for auguries and divinations.<sup>2</sup> Alarmed at their excessive interest in this aspect of Hafiz's poetry, Iqbal warned them against too much involvement in, Hafiz. Iqbal did not believe in "art for the sake of art" and therefore he thought that Hafiz could not be effective in refurbishing a spiritually impoverished personality or in inspiring people to face the problems of life with courage and confidence. The mystic circles of India reacted sharply to this criticism of Hafiz. Iqbal quoted an instance in support of his point of view. Aurangzeb once ordered some bad characters

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1. *Javid Namah*, p. 66.

2. An old manuscript of his *diwan* in the Bankipur Library shows that Humayun and Jahangir frequently consulted it for auguries.

of Delhi to give up their abominable profession and enter into legal wedlock by a specified date, failing which all of them were to be placed in a boat and drowned in the Jumna. Many prostitutes got married before the date. Of those who remained one came to Shah Kalim ullah of Delhi and sought his spiritual blessings. The saint told her to recite loudly the following couplet of Hafiz when government servants placed them in the boat :

در کوئے نیک نامی ما را گذر نه دادند  
گر تو نمی پسندی تغییر کن قضا را

Aurangzeb heard them reciting the couplet and was so touched by it that he withdrew his order. The prostitutes returned to their houses. Iqbal's criticism was that Hafiz's influence was so irresistible that it weakened the moral fibre of a ruler like Aurangzeb.<sup>1</sup> In fact Iqbal fully recognized Hafiz's greatness as a poet but he was not in favour of "impressionism" as it did not help in moral or spiritual culture of any individual or community.

Turning to the value of Persian mystic literature in prose it may be pointed out that Arabic classics on religion and mysticism remained limited in their impact till such time as these were translated into Persian.

Mansur Hallaj is an outstanding figure in the annals of Islamic mysticism. His works were mainly in Arabic but he was born in Iran and had visited many countries including India. It was through Persian works that his ideas became known to Indian mystics. His mystic eminence was appreciated by the mystic circles of Delhi and he was considered an embodiment of the principles underlying the pantheistic philosophy. However, opinion about him was always divided. The

1. *Iqbal Kay Nasri Afkar*, pp. 99-100. It may be interesting to note that the great saint of Ganj Moradabad, Shah Fazl-i Rahman, used to write in his amulets (*ta'wiz*) this very couplet of Hafiz.

earliest Persian work to refer to him is the *Kashf-u'l-Mahjub*. Shaikh Hajweri firmly holds the view that "it would be an act of dishonesty to omit his biography from this work."<sup>1</sup> He quotes Shibli who is reported to have observed: "Al-Hallaj and I are of one belief, but my madness saved me, while his intelligence destroyed him."<sup>2</sup> Shaikh Hajweri refers to his fifty works which he found in Baghdad and other places. His advice to the travellers on the mystic path was :<sup>3</sup>

"You must know that the sayings of al-Hallaj should not be taken as a model, in as much as he was an ecstatic (*maghlub andar hal-i-khud*), not firmly settled, before his sayings can be considered authoritative."

Notwithstanding all this, as Hajweri himself admits, he "derived much support from him." He even wrote a book in defence of the views of Mansur. In one of his books, entitled *Minhaj*, now extinct, Hajweri gave a biographical sketch of Hallaj.<sup>4</sup> Though Hajweri seems deeply impressed by Hallaj and *Kashf-u'l-Mahjub* was a popular study in medieval India, the attitude of the Chishti and the Suhrawardi saints towards Hallaj was one of caution. They were afraid that pantheistic utterances of that type could lead to moral chaos. During the time of Firuz Shah Tughluq all those mystics who were inspired by Hallaji thought—Mas'ud Bak, Ahmad Bihari, Ruknuddin and others—were executed on charges of heresy. Even as late as the seventeenth century the state strictly dealt with Hallaji trends. The execution of Sarmad at the orders of Aurangzeb indicates the same attitude of disagreement with the views of Hallaj. Incidentally it may be pointed out that Professor Louis Massignon, the greatest authority on Hallaj, once told me that according to his researches the first Hallaji centre in India was formed in Bengal. However, one important source through which Hallaj's ideas

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1. *Kashf-al-Mahjub*, tr. Nicholson, p. 150.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 151.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 52.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 53.

reached India was Aush.<sup>1</sup> Massignon's researches have shown that Aush was a great centre of the Hallajis. Khwaja Qutb-u'd-din Bakhtiyar Kaki who belonged to Aush seems to have been deeply influenced by the Hallaji doctrines. Doctrines apart, Khwaja Kaki's life was one of total mystic absorption (*sukr*) in which he had little knowledge about his family or his visitors. Qazi Hamid-u'd-din Nagauri, his friend and associate, was also keenly interested in the thought of Hallaj. His *Risala-i 'Ishqiya* bears an indelible stamp of Hallaji thought. As I have shown elsewhere,<sup>2</sup> Hallaj's works were widely read in Chishti mystic circles. Shaikh Farid was often heard reciting the following verses about Mansur :

از نور جلال مرد مطلق خیزد  
و از شوق خدا نگرچه رونق خیزد  
این خاطر مردان چه عجائب بحری است  
چون موج خیزد همه اذالحق خیزد

Apart from Hallaj's thought, his execution became a symbol of sacrifice for the sake of freedom of thought and poets found no better expression for communicating the spirit of sacrifice for a cause than the episode of Mansur Hallaj :<sup>3</sup>

نہیں معلوم یہاں دار و رسن ہے کہ نہیں  
خون میں گر مٹی ہنگامہ منصور ہے آج

It is interesting to note that Iqbal found in Hallaj's thought many elements of permanent value. In *Javid Namah* Iqbal presents Hallaj as a dynamic force revealing secrets of *khudi*. In *Zabur-i 'Ajam* he depicts Hallaj along with Shankar and seems to suggest that he was inspired by Vedantic philosophy.<sup>4</sup>

1. Babur gives graphic description of Aush in his *Tuzuk*.

2. *Tarikh-i Mashaikh-i Chisht*, Vol. I, p. 404.

3. *Siyar-ul Auliya*, p. 486.

4. *Zabur-i Ajam*, p. 238.

In his *Lectures on the Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* and in *Javld Namah* he emphasized the originality of his thought and his greatness as a thinker. "In the history of religious experience in Islam which, according to the Prophet, consists in the 'creation of Divine attributes in Man', this experience has found expression in such phrases as—'I am the creative truth' (Hallaj), 'I am time' (Muhammad)', 'I am the speaking Quran' ('Ali), "Glory to me' (Ba Yazid)",<sup>1</sup> observes Iqbal.

While Hallaj's ideological influence remained confined to higher mystic intellects, the impact of Imam Ghazzali was more widespread. His *Kimiya-i-Sa'adat* became a popular study all over the Persian speaking world. In India the book was popularised by Shaikh Hamid-u'd-din of Nagaur and Shaikh Nizam-u'd-din Auliya of Delhi. The former used to exhort his disciples :<sup>2</sup>

بابا پیوسته این را در نظر می باید داشت

'Baba ! Always keep this before you.'

Every day passages from this work were read in the mystic centre of Nagaur.<sup>3</sup> Though *Kimiya-i Sa'adat* is, for all practical purposes, a Persian recension of *Ahya-ul-'ulum*, the Indian religious circles undertook to translate *Ahya* into Persian. Muaiyid Jajarmi translated it during the time of Iltutmish. The *Jawahir-ul-Qur'an* of Imam Ghazzali was read daily by Shaikh Nizam-u'd-din Auliya, who held a very high opinion about the critical faculties of the great Imam.

Perhaps no other work comes anywhere near *Kimiya-i-Sa'adat* in its influence on the religious thought and behaviour of the Indian Muslims. Unique in its comprehensiveness and calm and critical analysis of basic religious concepts, it contains a meticulously thought out code of conduct for ordinary

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1. *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, p. 109.

2. *Saroor-us Sudur* (MS).

3. *Saroor-us Sudur* (MS).

Mussalmans as also a complete guidance for moral and spiritual training of a mystic. Ghazzali had himself been a student of Greek Philosophy and as he says in his *al-Manqaz min al-zulal* he was greatly disillusioned by philosophy and had come to believe in the efficacy of 'cosmic emotion' which could unravel the mysteries of nature and which gave him the solace and peace of mind his soul longed for. Syed Muhammad Gisu Daraz of Gulbarga recited a verse which very neatly epitomises the position of Ghazzali :<sup>1</sup>

عقل گوید شش جهت حد است بیرون راه نیست  
عشق گوید هست راهی رفته ام من بارها

Intellect says : there are six dimensions and nothing beyond them.

Love says : there is, I have gone there many a time.

Another work which fascinated the mystics during the medieval period was *Ruh-ul-Arwah*. The mystic circles of Delhi believed that :<sup>2</sup>

از کتابهای که مشایخ نبشته اند ، روح الارواح نیک  
با راحت است ، نیکو کتابی است . . . . قاضی  
حمیدالدین ناگوری آن را یاد داشت ، بر سر منبر ازان  
بسیار گفته .

Of the books that *mashaikh* have written *Ruh-u'l-Arwah* is very refreshing. It is a good book...Qazi Hamid-ud-din Nagauri knew it by heart and used to quote from it extensively in his sermons.

Shaikh Nizam-u'd-din Auliya refers in *Fawa'id-ul Fu'ad* to the life and teachings of many eminent saints like Ibrahim Adham, Shaikh Abu Sa'id Tabrizi, Shaikh Ahmad Ghazzali, Khwaja

1. *Jawami'-ul Kalim*, p. 281.

2. *Fawa'id-ul Fu'ad*, p. 83 ; see also *Jawami' ul-Kalim*, p. 54.



Junaid Baghdadi, Shaikh Husain Zanjani, Shaikh Saif-u'd-din Bakharzi, Shaikh Shihab-u'd-din Suhrawardi and others. His mystical thought was in fact conditioned by the information he had collected about their lives and their ideas. If the sources are traced, it would appear that 'Attar's *Tazkirat-ul-Auliya*, Khwaja 'Abdullah Ansari's translation of Sulami's *Tabaqat-i Sufiya* and Muhammad b. Munawwar's *Asrar-ut-Tauhid* were available to the Shaikh and he had drawn his information from these books.

The *Kashf-ul-Mahjub*, though written in India, consolidates mystic ideas as they had developed in Iran and Central Asia. The author had personal contact with many eminent mystic teachers like Hasan Khuttali and Abul Qasim Gurgani. Dara Shukoh considers *Kashf-u'l-Mahjub* as the first book on mysticism written in Persian. This may or may not be correct, but it is a fact that *Kashf-u'l-Mahjub* exercised tremendous influence on contemporary and later religious thought, not only in India but in Iran also. Many passages from it are quoted, word for word, in Jami's *Nafahat-ul-Uns*. In India Shaikh Nizam-u'd-din Auliya used to say that one who had no spiritual mentor, *Kashf-u'l-Mahjub* was enough for him to guide.<sup>1</sup>

Another great mystic teacher and writer of eminence to whom Indian mystics looked in organizational matters pertaining to *khanqah* life was Shaikh Shihab-u'd-din Suhrawardi. His book '*Awarif-ul-Ma'arif*' was a guide book for all those who founded or organized *silsilahs* in new lands. Shaikh Farid-u'd-din Ganj-i Shakar used to teach it to his senior disciples and according to the author of *Gulzar-i-Abrar* he had also prepared a summary of this book. However, the book became popular when its Persian translations were made and mystics of all *silsilahs* accepted it as a manual of guidance. The earliest Persian translation, as could be expected, was made at Multan by Qasim Daud Khatib during the time of Shaikh Baha-u'd-din Zakariya, a distinguished disciple of

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1. *Durar-i Nizami* (MS).

Shaikh Shihab-u'd-din.<sup>1</sup> Referring to the reasons that prompted him to undertake its translation, Qasim Daud says that his main object was to make it available to a larger circle of people so that they could act upon it. Another early translation of '*Awarif*' was made by Shaikh 'Abdur Rahman b. 'Ali b. Buzghush whose father was a disciple of Shaikh Shihab-u'd-din Suhrawardi. Long before 'Izz-u'd-din Mahmud Kashani (ob. 735/1334) prepared a Persian abridgement of '*Awarif-ul-Ma'arif*' under the title *Misbah-ul-Hidayah wa Miftah-ul Kifayah*,<sup>2</sup> the ideas of Shaikh Shihab-u'd-din Suhrawardi had become popularly known in the mystic circles of India.

At the higher level it was the thought of Ibn 'Arabi which dominated the intellectual scene. Though his works were in Arabic, it was mainly through Persian channel that his ideas got currency in India. The key and kernel of Ibn 'Arabi's thought is pantheism, and, as pointed out earlier, the earliest exposition of pantheistic ideas is found in the *Upanishads*. So ideas and movements which had a pantheistic basis were bound to appeal to the Indian mind. The pantheistic philosophy provided a common meeting ground and created an ideological bridge between Islam and Hinduism. Though commentaries on Ibn 'Arabi's works were written in India by Syed 'Ali Hamadani of Kashmir, 'Ali Peru Mahaimi of Gujarat and others, the ideas of Ibn 'Arabi fascinated the Indian Sufis when 'Iraqi and Rumi prepared the ground for the reception of such ideas. Mas'ud Bak's *diwan* as well as his *Mir'at-ul-'Arifin* reflect the influence of Ibn 'Arabi. Shah Muhibb ullah of Allahabad wrote commentaries on Ibn 'Arabi's works both in Arabic and in Persian. From the sixteenth century onwards enormous literature appeared in India on the mystical ideas of Ibn 'Arabi. Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi Mujaddid-i Alf-i Sani's criticism of pantheism gave a temporary set-back to this trend but when Shah Wali ullah attempted a reconciliation between

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1. See Dr. Nazir Ahmad, "The Oldest Persian Translation of the '*Awarif-ul-Ma'arif*'", in *Indo-Iranica*, Vol. XXV, Sept.-Dec., 1972, pp. 20-50.
  2. Edited by Agha Jalal Huma'i, Tehran.

the thought of Ibn 'Arabi and Mujaddid Alf-i-Sani, pantheistic ideas again became a force in the mystic realm.

In the propagation of Ibn 'Arabi's mystical thought Mahmud Shabistari's *Gulshan-i Raz* played a very important role.<sup>1</sup>

One of the most distinguished Persian sufis who was a very enthusiastic advocate of Ibn 'Arabi's ideas was 'Abdur Rahman Jami (817-898/1414-1492). His literary works and his mystical ideas were well-known in India during his life-time. In the preface to his *Lawa'ih* he says that he has merely interpreted the mystic experience of several eminent saints; he himself had experienced no mystic trances. But this is Iranian modesty. Mahmud Gawan corresponded with him and he created in him an interest in Ibn 'Arabi's thought.<sup>2</sup>

Itineracy being a part of the mystic discipline of the medieval period, itinerant mystics from Iran and India carried mystic traditions from one country to another. When objections were raised against audition parties (*sama'*) at the court of Ghiyas-u'd-din Tughluq, Maulana 'Alam-u'd-din Suhrawardi told the Sultan that he had attended *sama'* meetings in many Muslim countries and nobody objected to them anywhere.<sup>3</sup>

سماع در میان مشایخ از شیخ جنید و شبلی موروث است.

The last grèat mystic intinerant who visited Iran and the Middle East was Maulana Fazlullah better known as Jamali. His meeting with Maulana Jami at Harat was a historic event. Due to long and arduous travels, Jamali had no clothes on

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1. "The exposition of the doctrine of the Unity of Being in the book adds nothing to what had earlier been said by Ibn Arabi. Mahmud, however, is much clearer and much more precise than his spiritual teacher." M.M. Sharif, *A History of Muslim Philosophy*, Vol. I, p. 839.
  2. *Riyaz-ul Insha*, p. 156.
  3. *Siyar-ul Auliya*, p. 530.

his body when he entered the *majlis* of Maulana Jami. Jami was a bit displeased when he saw a beggar-looking visitor sit near him regardless of the dust and the dirt that had enveloped his body. When Jami came to know about his Indian origin, he asked him if he knew Jamali. Jamali recited the verse :

ما را ز خاک کویت پیراهنے ست برتن  
آن هم ز آب دیده صد چاک است تابدامن

I have on my body a garment made of the dust of your lane;

And that too tears have torn into hundreds of pieces.

and as these verses ran on his lips tears trickled down his cheeks and rolled on his body piercing his garment of dust. Jami stood up excited and embraced him with mixed feelings of surprise, love and embarrassment. This meeting between Jami and Jamali was in fact the last meeting between mystic traditions of India and Iran. Jami had written *Nafahat-ul Uns* to popularize the great mystics of Islam and their teachings; on his return Jamali wrote *Siyar-ul 'Arifin* perhaps inspired by the great mystic-scholar, Jami, and provided interesting details about the early Muslim saints of India.

Of the large number of traditions—spiritual and literary—which came from Iran and influenced the Indian mystics reference may be made here to only two spiritual traditions—Renunciation of Ibrahim bin Adham and Experience of Mai'raj—and one literary tradition—the compilation of *malfuzat*.

The traditions of renunciation as developed in Khorasan, Balkh and Merv influenced the Indian sufis and they looked to Ibrahim b. Adham (ob. 160/777), Shaiq Balkhi (ob. 194/810), 'Abdullah bin Mubarak of Merv (ob. 181/797) as the ideals of abstinence, self-denial and resignation to the will of God. Ibrahim b. Adham's father was one of the kings of Khorasan. The story of his renunciation illustrates how

the inner voice of conscience can bring about a total change in the character of a man. One day he went to the chase and while pursuing an antelope, heard the animal address him thus : "Wast thou created for this, or wast thou commanded to do this ?" Ibrahim repented, gave up his princely life and "entered on the path of asceticism and abstinence." The story had a deep psychological significance : it illustrated the rebellion of conscience which led to total renunciation of all worldly ties, pleasures and pursuits. Ibrahim bin Adham's experience was quoted by Indian mystics from Shaikh 'Ali Hajweri<sup>1</sup> down to the 19th century. Shaikh Nasir-u'd-din Chiragh's account of the circumstances which led to Ibrahim Adham's renunciation<sup>2</sup> is perhaps the best and most effective in Indo-Muslim literature. The incident was cited by mystics to illustrate the conflict in human personality between poverty and affluence and the ultimate success of the divine in man which made him forsake worldly self and power in order to achieve the equanimity of soul.

The Prophet has always occupied a central and pivotal position in the ideology of Islamic mysticism. His vigils, his meditation at Hira and his direct relationship with the Lord has inspired travellers on the mystic path. Though a sufi could never attain to prophetic consciousness as it was believed that the final state of a mystic's experience was the beginning of a Prophet's spiritual experience,<sup>3</sup> the mystics tried to emulate the Prophet. The Prophet's *ma'i'raj* (spiritual ascension) greatly fascinated them. It was Bayazid Bistami who took the *ma'i'raj* as a theme for expressing his own mystical experience. Shaikh 'Ali Hajweri<sup>4</sup> and Khwaja Farid-u'd-din 'Attar give the details of this "Ascension of Bayazid." Conscious of the complications and confusion that this could create in public mind, Hajweri remarked : "The ascension of prophets takes place inwardly and in the spirit. The body

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1. *Kashf al-Mahjub*, tr. Nicholson, 103.

2. *Khair-ul Majalis*, pp. 48-50.

3. *Khair-ul Majalis*, p. 134.

4. *Kashf al-Mahjub*, Nicholson, p. 238.

of an apostle resembles the heart and spirit of a saint in purity and nearness to God. This is manifest superiority."<sup>1</sup> However, Bayazid's experience fascinated Indian Sufis also and at least two saints—Syed Muhammad Ghaus of Gwaliyar and Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi Mujaddid-i Alf Sani—gave expression to their spiritual experiences which were akin to the *mai'raj*. The Shattari saint wrote *Risala-i Mai'rajia* to describe his experience and Bayram Khan Khan-i Khanan strongly objected to it.<sup>2</sup> Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi mentioned his experiences to Khwaja Baqi Billah in a letter.<sup>3</sup> The criticism of this letter came from Jahangir also.<sup>4</sup>

An interesting and significant observation in this connection was that of Shaikh 'Abdul Quddus Gangohi. He said: "Muhammad of Arabia ascended the highest Heaven and returned. I swear by God that if I had reached that point, I should never have returned."<sup>5</sup> Iqbal interpreted this observation as an indication of the difference between the prophetic and saintly types of religious experience. "In the whole range of Sufi literature", say Iqbal, "it will be probably difficult to find words which, in a single sentence, disclose such an acute perception between the prophetic and the mystic types of consciousness. The mystic does not wish to return from the repose of 'unitary experience'; and even when he does return, as he must, his return does not mean much for mankind at large."<sup>6</sup>

In the literary sphere the tradition of *mal'fuz* writing came from Iran. The *mal'fuz* literature of medieval India which contains a record of the utterances of the sufi saints is a mine of information for contemporary history—life and problems of the common man, the religious thought at higher and lower

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1. *Kashf al-Mahjub*, pp. 228-39.

2. *Iqbal Namah*, II, p. 149; *Akbar Namah*, II, 135.

3. *Maktubat*, Vol. I, pp. 19-20.

4. *Tuzuk-i Jahangiri*, pp. 272-273.

5. *Lata'if-i Quddusi*, pp. 65.

6. *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, p. 124.

levels etc. In India the credit of introducing this new type of literature goes to Hasan Sijzi, the compiler of *Fawa'id-ul Fu'ad*, but it can hardly be denied that the inspiration came to him from the *Asrar-ut Tauhid*<sup>1</sup> of Muhammad bin Munawwar and the *Halat-o-Sukhanan-i Shaikh Abu Sa'id Fazlullah b. Abil Khayr al-Maithani*,<sup>2</sup> compiled by Muhammad b. Abu Ruh Lutfullah. Both deal with the life and the table talks of Shaikh Abu Sa'id Abul Khair. That the *maifuz* tradition in India was first adopted at the *khanqah* of Shaikh Nizam-u'd-din Auliya should cause no surprise as the Shaikh was an ardent admirer of his mystic principles and practices. The enormous *maifuz* literature that has been produced in India during the last several centuries owes its beginning to Iranian impact.

A number of mystic *silsilahs* have flourished in India. Abul Fazl gives a list of 14 orders which have worked in India. Some of the important saints of these *silsilahs* either belonged to Iran or had spent some time in the mystic centres of Iran. Before he entered India, Khwaja Mu'in-u'd-din Chishti, the renowned founder of the Chishti order in India, had spent considerable time in the company of saints like Shaikh Najm-u'd-din Kubra, Shaikh Yusuf Hamadani, Shaikh Nasir-u'd-din Astarabadi and had fully imbibed the traditions of Islamic mysticism as developed in Iran. The founder of the Firdausi order in India, Shaikh Badr-u'd-din Samarqandi, was a disciple of Shaikh Saif-u'd-din Bakharzi who was a friend of Maulana Jalal-u'd-din Rumi's father. Makhdum Muhammad Gilani who popularized the Qadiri order in India, had for years travelled in Iran and Khurasan. Khwaja Baqi Billah, the founder of Naqshbandi order in India, was born at Kabul and had spent considerable time in Mawara-un-Nahr and Balkh.

The Shattari *silsilah* came direct from Iran. Its pioneer saint in India was Shah 'Abdullah Shattari who lies buried at Mandu.

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1. Edited by Ahmad Bahmanyar, Tehran, 1934.

2. Ms : British Museum.

Syed Muhammad Ghaus, an outstanding saint of the Shattari order translated *Amrit Kund* into Persian under the title of *Bahr-ul Hayat*. What is most striking about this book is the way Syed Muhammad Ghaus has used Muslim mystic terminology to communicate Hindu mystical concepts. He was in a way a precursor of Dara Shukoh whose *Majmua'ul Bahrain* is an expression of the same attitude which inspired Syed Muhammad Ghaus.

The ethical and moral ideals enunciated by Persian masters became the inspiring motive of the lives of the Indian saints. The *Kimiya-i Sa'adat* of Imam Ghazzali, the *Kashf-ul Mahjub* of 'Ali Hajweri, and the *masnavi* of Rumi were the books round which the entire mystic tradition of India revolved. Mystics apart, rulers also took inspiration from these works. According to Abul Fazl, *Kimiya-i Sa'adat* of Imam Ghazzali, *Gulistan* of Sa'di, *Hadiqa* of Sanai, *Masnavi* of Jalal-u'd-din Rumi, *Jami Jam* of Auhadi, *Khamasa-i Nizami* and *Kulliyat-i Jami* were continually read out to Akbar.<sup>1</sup> The spirit of cosmopolitanism generated by these mystic classics finds such neat expression in the poetry of Akbar's reign.<sup>2</sup> Taken as a whole the Persian mystical ideas and traditions supplied to Muslim mystical movement in India, its motive power, its driving force, its ideals and its goal.

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1. *A'in-i Akbari*, Blochmann, p. 100 ; *Akbar Namah*, Vol. I, p. 271.

2. Nizami, *Studies in Medieval Indian History and Culture*, pp. 131-149.



## *India's Cultural Relations with Central Asia During the Medieval Period\**

India's contact with Central Asia dates back to remote past and covers many aspect of human relationship—social, political, intellectual and economic. Caravans of men and streams of thought constantly flowed between India and Central Asia and despite limited means of communication intimate cultural contacts developed between these two regions. In this paper, however, only a synoptic over-view of the nature of this relationship during the medieval period is attempted.

Two preliminary observations are necessary in order to put this study in a proper perspective with reference to Time and Space.

(1) The Central Asian region, stretching from the lower Volga and eastern shores of the Caspian Sea, to the frontiers

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of Western China, and from southern Siberia to the frontiers of Iran and Afghanistan passed through many political vicissitudes during the millenium under review. Considered in the broad perspective of India's contact with Central Asia, its history falls into four distinct phases : (i) from the late 7th century to the year 1220—i.e. from the Arab conquest of Central Asia to the overthrow of Central Asian States, particularly Bukhara, by Chengiz Khan in 1220, (ii) from 1220 to 1370—i.e. from Chengiz Khan's conquest of Central Asia to the rise of Timur. This period of 150 years saw in India the establishment of the Delhi Sultanate and in Central Asia the destruction of the state-system evolved over a period of several decades by the Turkish dynasties. Some of the significant developments of this period were—(a) the rise of the Mongol *ulus*es ; (b) the fall of Baghdad in 1258 ; (c) the conversion of the Mongols to Islam and the simultaneous presence of the Muslim and the Mongol principalities in Central Asia ; (d) the rise of Il-Khans in Persia and (g) the efforts of the Mongols to build anew the cities which some decades earlier their ancestors had destroyed. (iii) from 1370 to 1526—i.e. from the rise of Timur to the advent of Babur on the Indian scene. During this period Timur gave a new fillip to the life and culture of Central Asia and Samarqand emerged again as a cradle of splendour. Though Timur's descendants continued to hold this area for many years, their internecine conflicts destroyed its political individuality. This period of a century and a half synchronized with the rise of the provincial kingdoms in India. Some of these provincial governments had cultural and diplomatic relations with Central Asia and Persia ; and (iv) from the beginning of the 16th to the middle of the 17th century—being the era of the Great Mughals in India, the Safavids in Persia and the Uzbeks in Central Asia. The nature, extent and accent of India's relationship with Central Asia was determined by these political developments.

(2) The Taklamakan explorations have brought to light thousands of manuscripts written in different scripts and multitudes of works of art, pictorial and plastic, which mark this

region as the meeting ground of Hellenistic, Indian, Persian and Chinese forms of Civilization. India was connected on the main land with this region through two routes : (a) the Gomal pass which led to Dera Ismail Khan and thence to Upper Sind Sagar Doab, and (b) the Kashmir routes : After crossing the Kara Koram the trade caravans reached Yaraqand where the routes from Ladakh, Tibbet, China, Khotan and India were joined by those leading to Kashghar.<sup>1</sup> From Kashghar, the merchants could proceed to Samarqand and Bukhara. Now Samarqand, the first city of Transoxiana, was the junction of the main trade routes from India (via Balkh), from Persia (via Merv) and from the Turkish dominions.<sup>2</sup> Likewise this region became a junction for the meeting of ideas.

#### **A: IDEAS**

In the early centuries of the Christian era, during the period of the Kushanas, great centres of Buddhism appeared at Khotan, Kashghar, Tashkent, Bukhara, Balkh and Bamiyan. With the establishment of Arab power in Central Asia, Buddhist and Islamic ideas entered into a dialogue and a number of new schools of thought appeared which sought re-adjustment of ideas to new situations. Many Indian concepts which had influenced the Central Asian mind, came back to India under new garbs and new rubrics.

In this transmission of ideas the role of Baghdad cannot be over-emphasized. Since Central Asia was a part of the vast Arab Caliphate which extended up to Sind, men, movements and materials could flow easily between Central Asia and India and as Arnold remarks, "a traveller could pass from the confines of China to the pillars of Hercules, from the banks of Indus to Cicilian gates, from the Oxus to the shores of the Atlantic without stepping outside the boundaries of the

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1. Stein, *Khotan*, I, p. 88.

2. Barthold, *Turkistan*, p. 83.

territory ruled over by the Caliph in Baghdad.”<sup>1</sup> When the Abbasid Caliphs evinced interest in Indian sciences and invited Indian scholars to work in their bureau of translations, a new source for the transmission of Indian ideas to Central Asia came into prominence. Ibn Nadim gives a long list of Indian works which were translated into Arabic at the instance of the Barmakids. It was but inevitable for these Indian works to reach the Central Asian scholars.

The surviving Buddhist traditions of the Kushana period in Central Asia received a fresh sustenance from the Indian concepts communicated through Baghdad and a new era of cultural contacts began.

(1) In 770 A.D. *Barhamspat Sindhanta* was translated into Arabic as *As-Sind-Hind*. Later on two other Sanskrit works on astronomy *Aryabhatiya* (of Aryabhata, 499 A.D.) and *Arkand* were rendered into Arabic. Through these three books the Sindhantic method reached Central Asia and many Indian astronomical concepts found currency there, though Aryabhata's theory that the earth rotates on its axis, remained isolated. al-Khwarizmi (ab. circa 835) wrote a book on the Indian (*Hindi*) method of calculation.

It may, however, be indicated that “the older Indian methods were transformed and developed and replaced more and more by Greek methods.”

(2) Indian medical ideas, herbs and methods of treatment were transmitted from Baghdad to distant parts of the Caliphate. Manka, who had cured Harun-ur-Rashid, was put in charge of a bureau of translations for rendering Sanskrit works on medicine into Arabic. The earliest Indian works on medicine by Charaka and Susruta are frequently referred to by Razi (Rhazes) and Bu 'Ali Sina (Avicenna) in their works. In the 14th century we find Il-khanid envoys, including men like Rashid-u'd-din Fazlullah,<sup>2</sup> visiting India in search of Indian herbs and medicines. It is not without significance that the earliest work of Indian medicine, the Bower

1. *Travels and Travellers of the Middle Ages*, p. 89.

2. *Makatabat-i Rashidi*, ed. S.M. Shafl.

MS, was found in Chinese Turkistan in 1890.<sup>1</sup>

(3) In the sphere of religion, the impact of Indian thought was more significant. The Mu'tazalite treatises of the 8th century contain accounts of the Indian monks and hermits. Wāsil b. Ata (circa 748) and Jahm b. Safwan (ob. 746) held discussions with the Buddhists and Nazzam (ob. 845) was charged with Buddhist beliefs. Mu'ammār b. 'Abbad al-Sulami (circa 833), a Qadarite entertained Indian ideas.<sup>2</sup> The extent of Central Asian knowledge about Indian religions may be gauged from the section on India given by Shahrastani (1076-1153) in his *Kitab-ul Milal wan Nihal*. The author gives an accurate account of Buddhist psychology and doctrines. He writes on Bodhisattvas and the successive Budhas and on certain practices of Hinduism—the worship of the Goddess Kali, whose idol (Mahakalia) is described, ablutions in the sacred rivers etc. Of course, the philosophic enquiries of Alberuni about Indian thought, were unprecedented in their depth and dimension.

A number of Indian and Buddhist concepts influenced the mind of the people of Central Asia. The Karrami cult, for instance, to which even the founder of the Delhi Sultanate, Shihab-u'd-din Muhammad Ghuri belonged in his early years, was a half-way house between Mahayana Buddhism and Islam. Shaikh 'Ali Hajweri (ob. after 1074) speaks about some early mystic *garohs* (groups); the *Hululis* (those who believed in Transmigration of Souls) and the Kharrazis who believed in *fana* (annihilation) and *baqa* (subsistence) were obviously inspired by the Indian idea of Nirvana.

(1) The four great books on which the structure of Muslim religious sciences was built in India during the medieval period came from Central Asia—I mean, the *Sahih* of Imam Muhammad bin Isma'il Bukhari (ob. 870), the *Kashshaf* of Abu Qasim Mahmud bin 'Umar al-Zamakhshari (ob. 1144), the

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1. Edited and translated by A.F.R. Hoernle in the *Arch. Survey of India*, Vol. XXII, 1893-1912.
  2. Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, p. 430.

*usul* of 'Ali b. Muhammad Bazdavi (ob. 1089) and the *Hidaya* of 'Ali bin Abu Bakr Marghinani. Throughout the medieval period these books were prescribed in the syllabus of the Indian *madrasahs* and formed the basis of all intellectual activity as the Indian *alims* wrote commentaries, annotations, summaries etc on these works.

Though the Muslim religious thought went on rotating within the frame-work set by these classics, the Indian scholars attained greater mastery over these branches in the 14th century than the scholars of Central Asia. In fact Central Asian scholars sought commendations on their works from the Indian scholars. 'Isami says<sup>1</sup> about Delhi :

اگر مشکلی در بخارا ، فتاد  
و اگر فتنه در سمرقند زاد  
گرومی که مفتی آن کشوراند  
از اصحاب ایس شهر فتوی برند

'Isami is confirmed by Ziya-u'd-din Barani who says that there were scholars in Delhi whose equals were not to be found in Bukhara, Samarqand, Baghdad, Khwarizm or any other place in the contemporary Muslim World. He refers to the visits of the Central Asian scholars<sup>2</sup> to India in order to learn at the feet of the Indian 'ulama. Khusrau declared about Delhi at this time. *قز علم با عمل دہلی بخارار*.<sup>3</sup> There were prosperous

Khorasani merchants in Delhi who used to send books, besides other articles, for sale in these areas.<sup>4</sup> It appears from a document included in *I'jaz-i Khusravi* that there were merchants in Delhi who had traded in Syria and Egypt and were preparing to proceed to China and Khita after visiting Delhi.<sup>5</sup>

1. *Futuk-us Salatin*, p. 452.

2. *Tarikh-i Firuz Shahi*, pp. 352-353.

3. *Dawal Rani Khizr Khan*, p. 46.

4. *Tarikh-i Mubarak Shahi*, pp. 107-108.

5. *I'jaz-i Khusravi*, Vol. II, p. 319.

(2) Devotion to the Sufi and his mystic cult formed an important feature of life during the medieval period. Many of the towns of this region—Aush, Jam, Subraward, Gilan, Yasi, Bukhara, Samarqand etc. — were cradle lands of mystic orders, and many important saints who planted these *silsilahs* in India came from Afghanistan, Central Asia or Persia. It is however a significant fact that the development of these mystic orders was greater in India than in the lands of their birth. Within a short span of time these Central Asian centres began to look to India for guidance and inspiration. During the time of Balban, some mystics of Chisht came to Delhi and requested a saint to accompany them to Chisht and revitalize the *silsilah*. The Shattari order, known as *Tariqa-i 'Ishqiya*, reached India in the 16th century and sought to bring about a synthesis of Hindu and Muslim mystical concepts and then penetrated into Indonesia.

The teachings of the Naqshbandi order, originally the *silsilah-i-Khwajgan*, bore a deep impact of the Buddhist ideas. It reached India during the 15th century through Khwaja Baqi Billah who belonged to Kabul but had lived in Samarqand for many years. From Samarqand he came to Kashmir and from there he reached Delhi. Within a few decades the leadership of Naqshbandi thought had been transferred from Samarqand to India and its most fundamental manuals had been prepared in India. It is interesting to note that Tashkend libraries abound in large number of Indian manuscripts of mystic works of the 16th and 17th centuries.

Religion apart, in some other spheres also Central Asian ideas became articulate. During the last several centuries the entire structure of the Unani system of medicine has been based on Bu 'Ali Sina's *Qanun*. Samarqandi schools of painting and calligraphy became popular in India and influenced the contemporary traditions of art.

Two other very important spheres in which ideas were imbibed and exchanged were architecture and gardening. Since India had a highly developed tradition of sculpture, Timur

carried with him many Indian stone-cutters who worked in Samarqand. Some of the buildings of the Mughal period were planned by a family of architects belonging to Khojend. Babur introduced new ideas in garden-planning. Abul Fazl remarks : "Formerly people used to plant their gardens without any order but since the time of the arrival in India of the Emperor Babur, a more methodical arrangement of the gardens has obtained and travellers now-a-days admire the beauty of the palaces and their murmuring fountains".<sup>1</sup> We find a Khurasani laying out the garden of Sultan Mahmud of Gujarat.<sup>2</sup>

### B : MOVEMENT OF MEN

During the period under review there was frequent movement of men between India and Central Asia. Tribal pressure, love of learning, mystic *wanderjahre*, commercial considerations, prospects of employment, and unsettled conditions were some of the determining factors. During the centuries from 11th-13th, the Ghuzz and the Mongol invasions threw large number of people into this country. When Chengiz tore to pieces the social and political fabric of Central Asia and razed to the ground all its stately buildings, mosques, *madrassahs*, *khanqahs* etc., large number of men belonging to different walks of life came to India to hide their heads under safer climes. They not only supplied the personnel to the nascent Delhi Sultanate, but planted also the traditions of Muslim scholarship in India. Many distinguished families which played a vital role in the cultural history of India during the medieval period came from Central Asian towns—— Bukhara, Samarqand, Nakhshab, Muhmera etc. Balban who was anxious to use the presence of these Central Asian scholars and princes to augment his prestige in contemporary Asia, settled them in different localities and named these *muhallas* after their homes as *Muhalla-i-Khwarazm Shahi*, *Muhalla-i-Atabeki*, *Muhalla-i-Samarqandi* and *Muhallai-i-Khita*.<sup>3</sup> More than a century

1. *A'in*, Blochmann, p. 93.

2. *Mir'at-i Sikandari*, p. 107-

3. *Ferishta*, I, p. 75.



later when Timur prepared a plan to make the first city in the world, he followed a similar practice and built around Samarqand a series of villages bearing the names of the chief towns of Islam—Baghdad, Damascus, Misr, Shiraz and Sultaniya.<sup>1</sup>

Balban had also instituted an enquiry into the genealogies of many families which had settled in India. Syed Ashraf Jahangir Simnani gives an account of these enquiries. It appears that many of the families belonged to Central Asia. The ancestors of Shaikh Nizam-u'd-din Auliya of Delhi, Syed Jalal-u'd-din of Uch, Shaikh 'Abdul Haq Muhaddis of Delhi, —to name only a few—came from Bukhara. An analysis of some of the families that came to India during this period and settled down here can yield details of great sociological interest. It is significant that these Central Asian elements did not take long to weave themselves into the Indian social pattern. Maulana Zia-u'd-din Nakhshabi, for instance, came from Nakhshab, near Samarqand, under extremely difficult circumstances, but acquainted himself with the local languages so quickly that he could translate a Sanskrit work into Persian.

Under such circumstances it is not surprising that 'Awfi's *Jawami'ul Hikayat wa Lawami'ur Rawayat* is the first Persian work to mention Uighurs and to give an account of some of the Turkish tribes of Central Asia. During this very period Fakhri Mudabbir compiled his *Shajra-i Ansab* (a genealogical history) and could consult in India one thousand books on the subject.

کم و بیش ہزار پارہ کتاب مطالعہ افتاد

From Kashmir down to Vijayanagar we find visitors from Central Asian lands. During the reign of Sultan Sikandar of Kashmir (1389-1413) many Central Asian scholars like Syed

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1. *Four Studies on the History of Central Asia*, Vol. I, p. 60.

Muhammad, Syed Jalaluddin, Baba Haji Adham etc, came and settled there.<sup>1</sup> In the distant state of Vijayanagar there was equal eagerness to know about the affairs of Central Asia. When 'Abdur Razzaq, the famous author of *Matla'-us-Sa'dain*, came to the court of Vijayanagar (1441 A.D.), as an envoy of Mirza Shah Rukh, the ruler asked him besides other things, about the peculiarities of the city of Samarqand.<sup>2</sup> A few decades later when an Indian scholar, Jamali, visited the literary and religious centres of Central Asia, people like Jami, fondly asked him about Indian literary traditions.

In the court of Akbar, we find people belonging to Central Asia working in different capacities. Amongst the nobles of Akbar, Qulij Khan, a *mansabdar* of six thousand *zat* and 5 thousand *sawar* was from Andijan and there were many others in different categories who originally belonged to Central Asia. Amongst his distinguished poets, Abul Fazl mentions the names of Mushfiqi of Bukhara, who had once been the Malik ush Shu'ara of 'Abdullah Khan<sup>3</sup> and Khwaja Hasan of Merv,<sup>4</sup> who received a reward of two lac *tankas* for his excellent poems on the birth of Salim and Murad. Qazi Abul Ma'ali, a distinguished jurist came from Bukhara and men like Naqib Khan learnt at his feet.<sup>5</sup> Akbar who was very fond of pigeons, employed Central Asian men, like Quli 'Ali and 'Abdul Latif of Bukhara,<sup>6</sup> Maqsud<sup>7</sup> and Masti<sup>8</sup> of Samarqand, to look after his pigeons as Central Asia had a reputation for the finest breed of pigeons. But Akbar's interest, in the words of Abul Fazl, "brought the trained pigeons of 'Umar Shaikh Mirza and Sultan Hasain Mirza into oblivion."<sup>9</sup> Of the twenty select athletes at the court of Akbar one Sadiq by

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1. Ferishta, II, p. 341.

2. Elliot & Dowson, Vol. IV, p. 120.

3. *A'in*, p. 653, Daghistani,

4. *A'in*, p. 644, Badauni, II, pp. 120, 132.

5. Badauni, *Muntakhab-ut Tawarikh*, Eng. tr. II, p. 45 ; II, pp. 210-211.

6. *A'in*, p. 315.

7. *A'in*, p. 315.

8. *A'in*, p. 315.

9. *A'in*, p. 644.

name was from Bukhara.<sup>1</sup>

### **C : MOVEMENT OF COMMODITIES**

Brisk movement of commodities and articles continued between India and Central Asia throughout the period, even when political conditions were disturbed. It is interesting to note that the Mongols themselves were keen to ensure smooth flow of commodities, and kept the roads safe for traders and caravans. In the early decades of the 13th century we find traders from those lands well established in Lahore. During this period so many merchants from foreign lands came to trade in India that *Khurasani* became a word for foreign merchants, as *Multani* was a word for Indian merchants and bankers, irrespective of their connection with Multan.

Abu Bakr Muhammad Narshakhi, writing in the middle of the 10th century, refers to the export of Zandaniji cloth (so named after the place of its manufacture, Zandana), near Bukhara) to India. This cloth was used by the rulers and the nobles for making garments and was bought at the same price as brocade.<sup>2</sup>

India produced certain commodities—like sugar, cotton, colouring material, in particular indigo—which the colder climes desperately needed, and foreign merchants were in a position to pay a higher price than the Indian consumer. India on the other hand, needed foreign commodities—horses of good breed, dried fruits, pearls, precious stones of various types. These were brought from Central Asian lands. But perhaps the most important import of Central Asia was its horses.<sup>3</sup> When political changes in Central Asia interrupted their supply Balban boasted that he could maintain the necessary supplies from other sources,<sup>4</sup> but the fact remains that

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1. *A'in*, p. 263.

2. *The History of Bukhara*, translated by R.N. Frye, Massachusetts 1954, p. 16.

3. *Masalik-ul Absar*, p. 22.

4. Barani, *Tarikh-i Firuz Shahi*, p. 53.

Central Asian horses were always there in the Indian armies. In Malik Muhammad Jaisi's *Padmavat*, the army of 'Alauddin Khalji is described as having Central Asian horses. In a gift to Sultan Shamsuddin of Lakhnauti, Muhammad bin Tughluq sent Khorasani horses.<sup>1</sup>

'Isami refers to the presence of Chinese traders in Delhi during the reign of Iltutmish. These merchants once showed their articles to the Sultan also—

زهر جنس اشیای آن بوم و بر  
کشیدند پیش شه نام و ر

2

The *Tarikh-i Ghazan Khan* (pp. 271-272) refers to the frequent visits of Indian traders to the lands of the Mongols. Elephants were taken from India to Central Asia.<sup>3</sup> In the wood carvings of Armenia, Indian elephants appear prominently. The Indian sword شمشیر هندی is mentioned in *Rahat-us Sudur*.<sup>4</sup> Our Indian records refer to Samarqandi paper.

Many fruits of Central Asia were daily brought to this country. During the reign of Akbar we find melons, pears and apples being brought to Agra from Samarqand.<sup>5</sup> There was such a continuous supply of fruits from Central Asia that Jahangir's table had melons of Badakhshan and grapes and apples of Samarqand.

Attention may be drawn to two significant facts which emerge from this brief survey. (a) Economic relationship between India and Central Asia was so vital during the medieval period that even when ruling dynasties of these regions had strained relations, movement of men and commodities never came to a standstill. (b) Another striking phenomenon

1. *Tarikh-i Mubarak Shahi*, p. 127.

2. *Futuh-us Salatin*, p. 122.

3. *Tarikh-i Ghazan Khan*, p. 254.

4. *Rahat-us Sudur*, ed. by S. Iqbal, p. 35.

5. *A'in*, Blochmann, p. 69.

is the ease and felicity with which the Central Asian families that settled in India wove themselves with the Indian Culture pattern and adjusted themselves with the Indian milieu. Was there any common element in them and the Indian situation which facilitated this adjustment? Did they discover in Indian society some traits and trends which found an echo in the inner most recesses of their historical self? A closer study of the history of some families of the early period will lead to interesting sociological conclusions.

## *Punjab in Medieval Times*

The Quin-Centenary celebrations of Guru Nanak have provided us with an opportunity to look back and study more intently the variegated pattern of spiritual life in medieval Punjab and the way it sought to resolve the diversity of Indian life in a unity born of the spiritual kinship of man. In fact Guru Nanak is one of those great men of history whose fame transcends the bonds of space and time. He addressed humanity as a whole and his message will, therefore, remain echoing down the corridors of time. What Mathew Arnold wrote about Goethe may, with striking aptness, be said with regard to him—

He took the suffering human race  
And read each wound, each weakness clear ;  
And struck his finger on the place,  
And said : Thou ailest here and here.

A deep and genuine humanism motivated all his actions and he applied himself with singular zeal and sincerity to the

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\*Presidential Address (Medieval Section) delivered at the Punjab History Conference, Patiala 1970.

eradication of those social evils which had eaten into the very vitals of Indian society. His concern for the outcaste and the downtrodden opened up new vistas of hope and confidence before those less advantageously placed in society. He understood better than any of his contemporaries the multi-racial, multi-religious and multi-lingual pattern of Indian society and worked ceaselessly to bring the various communities and culture-groups of India nearer and closer to each other. He wanted to see in all human relationships the harmony of a perfect orchestra.

To Guru Nanak religions were different paths to reach the same goal. He exhorted people to follow rather than quarrel about religion. When he declared—

*Religion consisteth not in mere words  
He who looks upon all men as equal is religious.*

he raised religion above all parochial and sectional loyalties. In an age when religious classes had developed parasitic attitudes, he persistently asked people to earn their bread with the sweat of their brow. Thus Guru Nanak, like his preceding Sufi saints, gave a revolutionary dimension to religion and identified religious activity with the service of mankind.

“The greatest of all the spirit’s tasks”, remarks Albert Schweitzer in his *Decay and Restoration of Civilization*, “is to produce a theory of the Universe (*weltanschauung*). In that all the ideas, convictions and activities of an age have their roots.” Guru Nanak gave such a theory of the Universe and a dynamic concept of the role of religion in society. It is hoped that the same spirit will remain articulate in the activities of this Conference and will provide an opportunity for a more intensive study of the broader patterns of Indian society. Indian history, despite all the diversity of races, governments, faiths and languages, has an essential and basic unity which should not only be sustained but strengthened by the historical researches of our generation. Regional studies, if they are not

allowed to run into parochial channels, help in proper quantification of data and in tracing the roots of traditions and customs in society. Historical data should be collected on regional but interpreted on all-India basis. The efforts made by Dr. Ganda Singh and his school of historians in the Punjab in this direction deserve the commendation of all students of history.

The medieval Punjab presents to one's mind the picture of a region at once the meeting place of different cultural traditions, the battleground of many a historic battle, the nerve centre of the Delhi Sultanate and the nursery of mystic traditions. The action, reaction and interaction of these diverse potential elements lends a peculiar charm to its history and forms a deeply interesting study from the sociological point of view.

When Sultan Mahmud of Ghaznin annexed Lahore and Multan in 1026-27, he treated these towns more or less as a base for further plundering raids in the country. Nothing surpasses Abul Fazl's terse but perceptive assessment of Mahmud's role in Indian history when he remarks :

د خون ہے گناہان ریخت،

There were, however, contemporaries of Mahmud who looked upon this drama of plunder and bloodshed with deep anguish and pain. Qazi Abul Hasan Bulani refused to accept the gift of gold brought by Mahmud from the Indian temples on the ground that he did not consider his campaigns to be justifiable according to the traditions of the Prophet. Alberuni who drank deep at the fountain of Indian philosophy did not perhaps go beyond the Punjab. That he could meet here erudite scholars well-versed in ancient Indian learning shows that despite the havoc wrought by Mahmud's invasions Hindu learning had retained much of its virility. A study of Alberuni's works—particularly his *Kitabul Hind* and *Kitabus Saydna*—along with the accounts of Arab travellers and geographers will yield interesting results not only about the social life



but also the geography, the fauna and flora and the road-system of the Punjab.

The belligerent atmosphere created by Mahmud's exploits began to subside when sufis like Shaikh 'Ali Hajweri embarked upon their mission of inculcating higher spiritual values in the people. Persian poetic literature produced in the Punjab during the 11th and the 12th centuries is likewise soaked in deep humanistic spirit and throws valuable light on the processes of social change in this region. Amir Khusrau's statement that Mas'ud Sa'd Salman produced a *diwan* in *Hindivi* shows that linguistic barriers between the various culture-groups had been crossed in the Punjab long before the Sultanate of Delhi came into being. Subsequent history of northern India is, in a way, an extension of the experiment of the Punjab where mystics, traders, poets and philosophers had provided an ideological bridge for contact and communication the various culture-groups.

Aibek's decision to shift his headquarters from Lahore to Delhi, was guided by his desire to discard the suzerainty of Ghaznin and lay the foundations of an India-based polity. Punjab became a shock-absorber for the Sultanate of Delhi when the Mongols began to knock at its gates. Military exigencies necessitated effective garrisoning of this region and crack forces of the Empire were consequently stationed at Multan, Lahore, Dipalpur and Samana. As was inevitable under the circumstances, the centre of political gravity shifted to the Punjab and wardenship of the marches became the most coveted assignment of the Sultanate—a stepping stone to kingship. An analysis of the ways and means adopted by these military governors to enlist support of the local elements can lead to interesting formulations.

For a proper understanding of the history of medieval Punjab—particularly its administrative set-up and economic resources—it is necessary to make a more careful study of its historical geography. Some forty years ago Dr. Ibadur Rahman Khan undertook the work and published a series of

articles in the *Muslim University Journal*, but the study has not been pushed further. A trained geographer with access to original historical source material alone can grapple with this task. Such a study of the historical geography will pave way for a geopolitical survey of the main historical developments in the Punjab. Under what circumstances many of its cities like Abuhar, Dipalpur, Samana, Kuhram and Kaithal rose to fame and why they withered away? On what basis were the administrative units and *shiqs* carved out? Were tribal or geographical considerations the determining factor? Why in certain areas even religious movements were prone to assume militant character? Why were many of the historic battles fought near Panipat? What inter-relation was there between the economy of the Punjab and the stability of the political structure at Delhi? Such and similar other questions can be answered only when geographical data is carefully analysed in the light of historical developments.

Closely connected with this geopolitical aspect of the Punjab is the economic significance of this land of five rivers. Since many trade routes passed through this region, there was brisk commercial activity in the Punjab throughout the medieval period. So much so that even the Mongol merchants carried on their commercial activities safely in this area. The *Multanis* constituted the main money lending class and controlled the trade economy of the Punjab, the Delhi region and the Doab. A study of the social background, professional status, economic position and spheres of activity of this class along with its relations with the governing class at Delhi, has yet to be made. During the Tughluq period the economy of the Punjab suffered a set back and agrarian discontent grew apace. Rebellions in Multan, Lahore, Hansi, Sunam and Samana during the time of Muhammad bin Tughluq were symptoms of grave agrarian unrest. The *asalib* of Muhammad bin Tughluq and the programme of irrigational facilities chalked out by Firuz Shah sought to meet this situation. It is worthwhile to investigate how and in what respects Firuz Shah's agrarian policy was responsible for the emergence of

a new class of zamindars and local chiefs in the Punjab which dominated the political scene after the death of Firuz Shah Tughluq. Some of the documents in the *Munshat-i Mahru* are important from this point of view and provide a glimpse into the social and economic life of the Punjab during the 14th century.

It was perhaps due to its peculiar geographical and historical position that the Punjab became the home of a number of tribes and castes which slowly and gradually wove themselves into a pattern but retained some distinctive characteristics. Some of these castes and tribes achieved eminence at professional level, other became famous for their political and military achievements. A study of the Khokars, Gakhars, Mandhakars, Turkbachas etc. will be helpful in understanding the nature of political activity in the Punjab during the medieval period.

Notwithstanding the feverish military activity that went on its soil, the Punjab nurtured and developed a number of mystic movements which had a direct or indirect impact on the entire country. The reasons were perhaps more psychological than other. The Punjab had seen incessant military activity—armies marching to and from the frontier areas, the Mongols devastating the country and people being called upon every now and then to defend their life and property against foreign inroads. Thoughtful people turned to the first principle of life and found in the *khanqahs* not only an antidote to the prevailing hysteria of the period but the refreshing breeze of a different world. The Chishti and the Suhrawardi *khanqahs* which sprang up all over the Punjab were like oases of love and peace in an ocean of tumult and storm. Shaikh Farid Ganji Shakar's *jama'at khanah* at Ajodhan, for instance, was one of the greatest centres of spiritual activity in medieval India and all sorts of people—Hindus and Muslims, rich and poor, *jogis* and *qalandars*, villagers and townsfolk, men and women—flocked to it from far and near. When Hamid's conscience rebelled against the service of Tughril, he left Lakhnauti and went to Ajodhan to sit at the feet of Shaikh Farid. The atmosphere of his *jama'at khanah* was a direct contrast to the

conditions prevailing in the political world. Balban made hideous distinctions between man and man and openly propounded his theory of *sharif* and *razil*. The Turkish aristocracy rolled in purple and enjoyed all the fruits of an expanding imperialism while the common people toiled and struggled ceaselessly for their bread. To Shaikh Farid all human beings were equal, made of the self same clay, whatever their race, creed, colour or status. His *jama'at khanah* was, at that time, the only place under the Indian sun where the Emperor of Hindustan and a penniless pauper were received in the same way. The contamination of court life had not touched its spiritual serenity and classless atmosphere. In fact it were the hospices of sufis, *sants* and *bhagats* which sustained the moral equilibrium of society in an age when in the words of Guru Nanak—

In the gloom of falsehood  
The moon of truth is never seen.  
And the law of life has taken wings.

It is significant that at least four important mystic orders of India—the Chishtiya, the Suharwardiya, the Qadiriya and the Naqshbandiya—were nurtured in the Punjab. The founder of the Raushaniya movement—Bayazid Ansari—was born at Jullundhar. The remark of the author of *Dabistan* that

گر ہند و را خود شناس یافتند بر مسلمانان مے ترجیع داندے

shows that the movement was broadbased and catholic in its spiritual approach. A careful study of these and other religious movements and their impact on contemporary thought and activity is a great desideratum. In an assessment of the role of these movements it is necessary to rid our mind of all the current shibboleths and refrain from reading back in these movements later concepts and trends of thought. Besides the tendency to study medieval movements in terms of polarities—such as a division of all religious activity into 'orthodox' or 'liberal'—is open to fundamental objections. J.H. Hexter has rightly objected to the use of polarities in historical interpre-

tations. There may be expressions of both tendencies in movements categorically assigned to any particular group or category of thought. For instance, the saints of the Naqshbandi school, particularly Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi and his descendants, are generally depicted as representatives of orthodox and sectional trends but we find that they were held in high esteem by the Hindus and the Sikhs. Rai Sunath Singh Baidar, for instance, thus attributes his poetic fame and popularity to the blessings of Shaikh Muhammad Zubair Sirhindi—

« در ابتدائے مشق چند قطعه تاریخ تولد از نظر کرامت  
 اثر قطب الاقطاب محبوب بارگاه صمدی حضرت شیخ  
 محمد زبیر سر هندی و آن خواجه امام العارفین علیهم  
 الرحمة گذشته مقبول طبع مقدس و موجب بشارت  
 قبول و اشتہار گردید ،

Some of the utterances of Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi which smack of rigidity and narrowness have to be seen in a particular background as they are nothing more than passing moods created by certain circumstances which appeared uncogential to him. His basic thought has an entirely different content—a content which attracted scholars to translate his *maktubut* into Arabic and Turkish. The way Shaikh Ahmad has defined mystic terms and has fixed their connotation shows both his fine mystic sensivity and his depth of knowledge. It may be pointed out that though many sufi movements thrived in India during the medieval period but the Naqshbandi-Mujaddidi order alone went out from the Punjab to Afghanistan, Central Asia and Turkey—centres where the context in which Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi's thought is generally studied in India has no relevance.

Punjab did not take long to establish its academic reputation in the contemporary medieval world. When Shaikh Bahauddin Zakariya went to Baghdad he impressed Shaikh Shihabuddin Suhrawardi the famous author of '*Awariful*

*Ma'arif*, as a mature scholar worthy of being entrusted with the work of enrolling disciples. Other inmates of his *khanqah* who had come for this purpose from different West Asian countries were puzzled to find that a *مرد هندوستانی* qualified himself for such an honour. An idea of the academic atmosphere and literary resources of the Punjab in the early years of the 13th century may be had from Fakhri Mudabbir's statement that on such an abstruse subject as genealogy he could consult one thousand books at Lahore—

مزار پارہ کتاب مطالعہ افتاد

Among the distinguished Indian scholars who attracted students from West Asian and Central Asian lands during the 'Alai period were a number of scholars who originally belonged to the Punjab. It is well-known that an orientation towards rationalistic subjects in the medieval syllabus was given by Maulana 'Abdullah and Maulana 'Abdul 'Aziz—both of whom belonged to Tulanba. The first Persian work on mysticism, the *Kashf ul Mahjub*—was produced in Lahore as also the first Persian book on the art of warfare, the *Adabul Harb wa Shuja'at*. The earliest known and recorded Urdu sentences were uttered in Ajodhan in the *khanqah* of Baba Farid. A study of the development of various languages in the medieval Punjab will bring to light many fascinating aspects of Indian history and culture. Works of mystics and poets like Mulla Shah, 'Abdullah Asi, Sultan Bahu, Waris Shah, Hamid Shah 'Abbas, Hashim and others reflect the moods of the people and constitute veritable source material for the social and intellectual history of the Punjab.

Search for fresh material—both political and non-political, dairies, letters, official documents, mystic works, poetic compositions, coins and inscriptions—and critical evaluation of the available data will, I am sure, lead to many new assessments of men and movements. We have also to take cognizance of the fact that sometimes personal, sectarian or political interests give an orientation to movements which

cannot be sustained by critical scholarship. Recent researches of Ghulam Rasul Mehr have shown that in the letters and writings of Syed Ahmad of Rae Bareilly later interested persons substituted the word 'Sikh' for the 'British' in order to save their skin from British retaliation. It is necessary to investigate the matter further. Similarly the spirit of Maharaja Ranjit Singh's government may be better assessed from the fact that he had invited Sir Syed's maternal grandfather Nawab Farid-u'd-din Khan Dabirud-Daula to take up the office of his revenue minister and that his court poet Hashim who wrote on Muslim themes enjoyed his patronage and favours.

## *Punjab through the Ages*

The spirit which has inspired Baba Farid's octo-centenary celebrations is not only laudable but is fraught with historic significance. After the partition of the country, an unfortunate trend which was gradually becoming manifest was to partition the cultural heritage of the Indian sub-continent. To the scholars of the Punjab goes the credit of reversing this process and demonstrating by their action the cultural unity of the country. Their contribution is epochmaking and has opened fresh vistas of cultural understanding and has shown how the unity and integrity of our cultural traditions and historical heritage can be preserved, despite the vagaries of the political climate.

Baba Farid Ganji-i Shakar was one of the most distinguished sons of the Punjab. His traditions of poverty, penitence and selfless devotion to the cause of humanity are still a source of inspiration in a world where man has conquered space and distances of geography, but as Sardar Kirpal Singh Narang has very aptly remarked, the distance between man and man remains. Baba Farid strove to annihilate this distance. His message was essentially a message of love—he believed that

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\* Presidential Address delivered before the Punjab History Conference, Patiala 1973.



the highest form of religious devotion was to bring happiness to the hearts of men. To him all human beings, whatever their caste, colours or creed, were the same: 'Children of God on earth' whom he loved, helped and inspired. He did not simply spin these ideas but expressed in his life the accumulated wisdom of the mystic creed. To cherish the memory of such a saint is, in fact, to invoke and imbibe the healthiest traditions of our history and culture.

Punjab presents a fascinating panorama of human achievement, both before and after the dawn of history. The glacio-archaeologic investigations of the Yale-Cambridge expedition undertaken in 1935 has established that the Early Man first entered the foot-hills of the north-west Punjab, particularly the Indus-Jhelum Doab. The Harappa-Rupar civilisation which flourished in this region was marked by exciting achievements in the social, economic and cultural spheres. In the later phase of the history of ancient Punjab great contributions were made in the fields of philosophy and culture. And these achievements in the realm of ideas and culture were accompanied by achievements in the field of battle. This land was the scene of the great Mahabharata. It was here that Taxila rose into prominence as a great seat of learning and attracted scholars from far and near. If we are to believe in the story of Apollonius of Tyana, scholars come to Taxila even from distant Greece. According to the *Jatakas*, the students here received education in the three Vedas on the one hand and in the 18 *Silpas* or crafts on the other. Thus professional training was combined here with discipline of the mind and the culture of the spirit. There was a special school of law and training was provided in medicine and military science also. A king of Banaras is reported to have sent to this place a Brahmin boy, Jotipala, for training in archery. The Banaras centre of learning was to some extent built up by the graduates of Taxila. What strikes a student of history most is the contribution that this region has made in such diverse spheres as religion, learning, culture, professional arts and warfare. The story of its political and military achievements through the ages has been presented by many a competent scholar.

I would like to refer to some to its contributions in the field of ideas and culture, particularly during the medieval period.

From as early as the time of the Aryan settlements Punjab had come to occupy a pivotal place in the religious and cultural life of the country. It was on the banks of its rivers that the Aryan *rishis* composed and sang the Vedic hymns. The word *Saptasindhva*, used in the Rigveda, stands for, according to Max Muller, five rivers of the Punjab along with the Indus and the Sarawati. It was here that Lord Krishna delivered the message of the Bhagwat Gita. Keykayi, the famous mother of Bharat, belonged to the Punjab. Kautilya, the famous author of *Arthashastra* and Panini, the great grammarian, were in one way or the other associated with this land.

The medieval Punjab presents to one's mind the picture of a region at once the meeting place of different cultural traditions, the battle-ground of many a historic conflict, the nerve centre of the Delhi Sultanate and the nursery of mystic traditions. The action, reaction and interaction of these diverse potential elements lends a peculiar charm to its history and forms a deeply interesting study from the sociological point of view.

It was in the Punjab that at least four of the major *Sufi* orders the country has known, the Chishtiya, the Suhrawardiya, the Qadiriya and the Naqshbandiya reached the meridian of their glory. The Raushaniya and the Mehdavi movements also found a congenial soil in this region. Thus the Punjab nurtured in her lap the Chishti *jama'at khanahs*, the Shurawardi *khanqahs*, the Mehdavi *daerahs* and the Naqshbandi *zawiyahs* and in her bosom flourished movements which made a deep and far-reaching impact on the culture and social life of the country as a whole.

Mysticism, it is said, had no genealogy. It is the eternal quest of the human soul to have direct communion with the Infinite and the Eternal. The words *mysticism*, *bhakti* and *ahsan* basically connote the same attitude of mind. The Greek

word *mueo*, from which the word 'mysticism' is derived, means joining together the two edges of a wound. What the surgeons do with the body, mystics do with the spirit : they strive to annihilate the distance between I and not-I by mystic absorption of the human soul in the Infinite. *Bhaj*, the root word of *Bhaki*, means the contact which a devotee establishes with the Supreme Being. *Ahsan*, the earliest term used for Sufism or Tasawwuf in the traditions of the Prophet, means praying in a way as if the devotee is having direct vision of God. Thus mysticism is, in its essence, a search for Unity in diversity. It seeks to restore the spiritual entity of man. Extended to social life, it means an attitude which looks at all humanity as one family. Considered in the broad framework of sociological developments, mystical movements have, by and large, acted as a great force of integration by transcending all artificial barriers. India, with her multi-racial, multi-religious and multi-lingual pattern of society, has always welcomed men imbued with high moral ideals who could, in the words of Rabindranath Tagore, "set at naught all differences of men by the overflow of their consciousness of God." Punjab has produced a brilliant galaxy of such God-conscious men who have taught lessons of human love and goodwill and their activities have acted as an antidote to the political hysteria of the period.

Shaikh 'Ali Hajweri, popularly known as Data Ganj Bakhsh, settled in the Punjab after the dust storm of Mahmud's invasions had settled and he tried to change the atmosphere of hatred and belligerency created by the Ghaznavid invasions. His book *Kashful Mahjub* was considered by Dara Shukoh the best Persian treatise on mysticism and for centuries it was a manual of guidance for mystics of all shades of opinion. According to the *Durar-i Nizami*, Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya used to say that for one had no *pir* to guide, the *Kashful Mahjub* was sufficient.

Shaikh Hajweri was followed by saints like Sultan Sakhi Sarwar, Shaikh 'Azizuddin Makki and Syed Ahmad Tirmizi who popularized the traditions of mystic love and goodwill. In the thirteenth century two mystic orders—the Chishtiya and

the Suhrawardiya, were established in the Punjab. Though the organization and method of work of these *silsilahs* was very different, both drew inspiration from the same guide book—the ‘*Awarif-ul Ma’arif*’ of Shaikh Shihabuddin Suhrawardi. Even Baba Farid is reported to have prepared a commentary on this work. Unlike the Suhrawardis, the Chishti saints eschewed all contact with the state; they neither accepted jagirs nor visited the courts. In the Chishti *jama’at khanahs* all the disciples lived in a single large community hall, while the Suhrawardi *khanqahs* had separate and commodious arrangements for each inmate. The Chishti saints worked mainly among the common people; the Suhrawardis were concerned primarily with the ‘selected few’. This difference in outlook and living conditions influenced the nature and determined the impact of their activities.

When it came to India, Ibn ‘Arabi’s pantheistic philosophy which has provided for later generation of Muslim mystics an ideological bridge between Islam and Hinduism and which echoes the philosophy of the *Upanishads*, first reached the Punjab. ‘Iraqi, a famous mystic poet, who in Qunia had long been in the company of Shaikh Sadruddin, a disciple of Ibn ‘Arabi, brought the Shaikh’s books to Multan. From Multan the concept of *Wahdat-ul Wujud* percolated to the mystic circles of the country and scholars like Syed ‘Ali Hamadani of Kashmir, ‘Ali Piru of Gujarat, Shah Muhibbullah of Allahabad wrote commentaries on the works of Ibn ‘Arabi. When Akbar sought to give a broad base to his government, he buttressed his position ideologically by the philosophy of Ibn ‘Arabi. In the 17th century when Dara Shukoh approached for guidance Shah Muhibbullah who, on account of his adherence to the philosophy of Ibn ‘Arabi was known as Ibn ‘Arabi Sani, he was told that it was not permissible for a ruler to discriminate between Muslims and non-Muslims.

Another very important source for the propagation of pantheistic ideas was the *masnavi* of Jalal-u’d-din Rumi. What people had refused to accept in the prose of Ibn ‘Arabi, they readily accepted through the verse of Rumi. It is interesting

to note that India's first acquaintance with Rumi was through the Punjab. Shaikh Sharafuddin Bu 'Ali Qalandar of Panipat is reported to have met Maulana Jalal-u'd-din Rumi.

An analysis of the development of Muslim mystical thought in India shows that the Punjab acted not merely as a repository of the Muslim mystic traditions but as a focal point in the process of its diffusion.

The Chishti centres in the Punjab—Ajodhan, Hansi, Panipat, Thanesar, Narnaul—attracted the attention of scholars and saints from different parts of the country. One very important saint of the early period whose life and contribution has not been studied with the care it deserves, was Shaikh Jamal-u'd-din of Hansi, a senior disciple of Baba Farid. His two volumes of poetical works and his Arabic book *Mulhimat* contain the essence of higher moral and ethical teachings, and have inspired generations of mystic teachers. The ideological structure of Indo-Muslim mysticism during the early medieval period was built on *Kashf-ul Mahjub*, *'Awari-ful Ma'arif*, *Fusus-ul Hikam*, *Futuh-i-Makkiya* and the *Masnavi* of Jalal-u'd-din Rumi and all these classical mystic writings were first received, analysed and accepted in the Punjab and then transmitted to the rest of the country.

During the following centuries, the Muslim mystic thought and institutions of the earlier era passed through a period of crisis. Partly, this was an aftermath of the policy of Muhammad bin Tughluq who had depleted the mystic ranks by employing young members of mystic families in government service. Though the Sultan himself had become a disciple of Shaikh 'Alauddin, a grandson of Baba Farid, he strongly disapproved of the mystic policy of non-involvement with the government projects. He forced Shaikh 'Alauddin's sons, Shaikh Muiz'zuddin and Shaikh 'Alauddin to proceed to Gujarat and serve as government officers. The Sultan would have drawn Shaikh Qutbuddin Munawwar, grandson of Shaikh Jamal-u'd-din Hansvi also into government service but when the Sultan met him and shook hands with him,

he pressed the Sultan's hand with such courage and confidence that he dared not ask him. However, the Chishti *silsilahs* in the Punjab, as elsewhere, suffered a serious set back as a result of Muhammad bin Tughluq's policy. The Suhrawardi order also lost its importance when Muhammad bin Tughluq took it upon himself to decide a succession struggle and appointed Shaikh Hud to the spiritual *gaddi* of Shaikh Ruknuddin. The situation further deteriorated when the Sultan later disapproved of the ways of Shaikh Hud and got him executed. As a result of the Tughluq Sultan's policies, the organisations of the Chishti and the Suhrawardi *silsilahs* became rickety in the Punjab. Firuz Shah made some effort to revive these *silsilahs* but government help could not revitalize what its unimaginative policies had earlier destroyed.

When the sources of mystic tradition became weak in the Punjab, it made a significant contribution in another field. Shaikh 'Azizullah and Shaikh 'Abdullah of Tulamba initiated courses in philosophy, logic and *ma'qulat*. Sikandar Lodi invited them to Delhi and they gave a new orientation to the syllabus of the *madrasahs* in northern India by introducing *ma'qulat* (philosophy and logic) in the curriculum.

In the 15th-16th centuries, Punjab experienced a new spurt of religious activity released by the Bhakti saints, Gosain Sadhus and the Sikh Gurus. Guru Nanak had a very catholic, dynamic and comprehensive concept of religion. He believed that beneath the crust of observances, rituals and conventions lay the real spirit of religion which it was the duty of a spiritual mentor to awaken. He thus initiated a renaissance in the religious life of the people and declared :

*Sweep up the debris of decaying faiths ;  
Sweep away the cobwebs of worn-out beliefs,  
And throw your soul wide open to the light  
Of reason and of knowledge.*

His message of 'reason' and 'knowledge' had a tremendous impact on the lives of the people whose attitudes and behaviour

he had studied more intimately than anybody else. His discourses with *Pandits, Sidhs, Mulas* and *Sufis* reveal that he did not propound abstract concepts of religion but enunciated active principles of life based on personal spiritual experience. Through his efforts, the contemporary atmosphere of gloom and frustration changed into one of hope and confidence. His use of Punjabi as a vehicle for the communication of ideas encouraged the subsequent production of literature in the Punjabi language.

In the seventeenth century, the Naqshbandi order was organized in the Punjab by Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi, popularly known as Mujaddid-i Alf-i Sani. According to Jahangir, who was otherwise ill-disposed towards Shaikh Ahmad, his disciples had reached every nook and corner of the country. Though some of the utterances of the Shaikh smack of rigidity and narrowness, he made a significant contribution in defining mystic terms and fixing their connotation. It is for this reason that his *maktubat* have been translated into Arabic and Turkish. It may be pointed out that though many Sufi movements thrived in India during the medieval period but the Naqshbandi-Mujjaddidi order alone went out from the Punjab to Afghanistan, Central India and Turkey.

Almost at the same time when the Naqshbandi *silsilah* was being organized in the Punjab on different lines, the Qadiri order also established itself and in certain respects negated and counteracted the exclusive approach of the Naqshbandis. Its saints, Miyan Mir, Mulla Shah, and Sultan Bahu made a deep impact on the life of the people. Miyan Mir was a great exponent of Ibn 'Arabi's philosophy and, according to the author of *'Amal-i Swaleh*, he remembered by heart many of the passages from the works of Ibn 'Arabi. He believed in a very catholic and liberal approach to problems of religion and society. Jahangir's efforts to persuade him to accept royal presents did not succeed and the saint continued to live in poverty, true to the traditions of mysticism. The thought of Miyan Mir and Mulla Shah becomes articulate in the works of Dara Shukoh. The fact that Miyan Mir was invited to lay the foundations of the

Golden Temple shows how greatly his catholicity of views was appreciated by the people.

Apart from the Sufi *silsilahs*, there were some very significant religious movements in the Punjab which played a vital role in the history of the region. Unfortunately detailed studies of the Yogi Naths, the Gosains, Nirmada Sadhus, Ram Raiyas and others have not been attempted to far.

Considering these gaps in our knowledge, the decision taken by the Punjabi University to create a chair of Sufic Studies is timely and laudable. If a history of the growth and development of mysticism in the Punjab is compiled, it will not only be a fitting tribute to the memory of Shaikh Farid, but will be a contribution of abiding value to the understanding of the social life and religious thought of the people of the Punjab. To achieve this a thorough search will have to be made of the vast mass of religious literature produced in the Punjab during the medieval period, in the form of *bani*, *sakhian*, *maktubat*, *varan*, *hukam name*, *malfuzat*, *aurad* poems, *panda bahis*, etc. If this literature is made available to the scholars, initially through a detailed bibliography, it will illumine many an unexplored aspect of medieval Indian history.

An intensive study of the religious life and conditions of the people of the Punjab would require a deeper and more comprehensive sociological analysis of the castes and tribes, their ethnology, social behaviour, customs, traditions and professions and then only a fuller view of the social landscape of the Punjab will be possible.

In recent years many western scholars have undertaken geopolitical studies of the historical developments of their respective countries. In India the studies have not even entered the elementary stage. A geopolitical study of the Punjab during the medieval period is a great desideratum. This will necessitate a careful framework of the historical geography of the Punjab, which the combined efforts of historians, geogra-



phers and geologists can provide. During its long history great variation have taken place in the geography of this region and these changes have affected its political and social institutions. The Vedas refer to a Great Desert situated east of the Sindhu (Indus) and the Sutudri (Sutlej). On reaching the banks of the Beas, Alexander was told that his army would have to cross a desert of eleven days' march before reaching the banks of the Ganges. How nature and man joined in changing the character of these unproductive areas may be an interesting field for investigation. Changes in the river courses have determined the rise and fall of cities. Innumerable mounds and rubble on the banks of dry river beds as noticed by Geological Survey, are silent witnesses of the past agricultural prosperity of this part of the country and unfold a woeful tale of the effects of the shifting of water courses. If the courses of the rivers of the Punjab are mapped, it will show the general line of settlements from time to time. The pioneer work done in this filed by Cunningham, Oldham, and I. R. Khan deserves to be pursued further.

Such a study would facilitate a more critical survey, of the economic life and institutions of the Punjab. Though primarily known for its agricultural fertility, the principal cities of the Punjab, were busy centres of trade and industry. According to Abul Fazl, in Lahore came the choicest products of Turkistan, Persia and Hindustan. Multan was another centre of international trade. How its agricultural surplus and extensive trade influenced the development of arts, literature and sciences needs a more careful and intensive study than has so far been made. In the 14th century, Shihabuddin al-'Umari of Egypt was informed by a jurist from Awadh, Sirajuddin 'Umar, that the chief provinces in the Sultanate of Delhi were twenty-three: of these Multan, Kuhram, Samana, Hansi and Sirsa belonged to the Punjab. Each of these provinces had twelve hundred cities. If this information reaching al-'Umari was correct, all these regions must have been flourishing centres of trade, industry and culture.

Sometimes the *raison d'être* for regional historical studies

is not fully appreciated. In a vast country like India, such studies are a necessary adjunct to our understanding of the broader patterns of Indian society. Indian history, despite all the diversity of races, governments, faiths and languages, has an essential and basic unity which should not only be sustained but strengthened by the researches of our generation. Regional studies undertaken in this spirit help in the proper quantification of data and in tracing the roots of traditions in society. Historical data should be *collected* on a regional but *interpreted* on an all India basis. This is exactly what the historians of the Punjab are engaged in doing and I wish all success to them in their venture.

## *Some Social and Religious Ideals of Guru Nanak\**

Guru Nanak is one of those great men of history whose memory is enshrined in the hearts of men and whose fame transcends the bonds of time and space. The universality of his message, combined with a dynamic approach to religion, deep humanism and concern for the outcasts and the downtrodden, immensely raised his stature in the eyes of his contemporaries who flocked to him in large numbers in search of that spiritual solace which is the deepest longing of the human heart. In fact, he belongs to the category of those great men who are not the monopoly of any particular sect, creed or religion, but are common to the whole human race. The following popular saying of the Punjab neatly epitomizes the public feelings of respect and reverence for him :

*Guru Nanak Shah Faqir  
Hindu ka Guru, Musalman ka Pir*

Guru Nanak believed in a catholic, dynamic and comprehensive concept of religion. Throughout his life, he incessantly strove to bridge the gulf between the various communities

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\*Presented at the International Seminar on the 'Life and Teachings by Guru Nanak' at Patiala on September 15, 1967.

and culture-groups of India and preached to them the gospel of truth, love, honesty and moral integrity. The fact that, when he died, the Hindus claimed his body for cremation and the Muslims for burial shows the extent to which he had succeeded in bridging the gulf between the Hindus and the Muslims by setting a personal example. Inspired by his tradition, 'Urfi, a poet of Akbar's court, wrote :

Oh 'Urfi ! Live in such a way with the good and the bad that when you die the Musalmans may wish to wash you with the *zam-zam* water and the Hindus may wish to cremate you.

In fact, 'Urfi, and more so his master Akbar, looked upon this last incident of Guru Nanak's life as the highest achievement of religious toleration and goodwill and wanted to seek its spirit work as an operative principle in the religious life of the Indians.

Guru Nanak believed that beneath the crust of observances, rituals and conventions lay the *real* spirit of religion which it was the duty of a spiritual mentor to awaken. This spirit is the same in all religions :

There is only one path to the Divine Court which is presided over by the One Eternal Lord.

If this universal spirit of religion could be evoked and channelled rightly, an ideal human society—free from conflicts, dissensions, discrimination and discord—could be established. He proclaimed that the law of life for human beings was to love one another and to find God through loving devotion. When he declared :

Religion consisteth not in mere words.  
He who looks upon all men as equal is religious.

he gave religion a new *elan vital* and identified it with higher social values.

Guru Nanak used to say that only a mind free from superstition, ignorance and obscurantism was capable of the highest religious experience :

Sweep up the debris of decaying faiths;  
Sweep away the cobwebs of worn-out beliefs,  
And throw your soul wide open to the light  
Of reason and of knowledge.

Guru Nanak's life was inspired by a deep humanism. Human life is precious, he used to say, and it should be utilized for the purpose it has been given :

This little shrine of human body !  
This great opportunity of life !  
The object is to meet the Beloved, the Master!

And this object could be realized only by serving the cause of the poor and the neglected. He had realized that more than food and fire, man's need was sympathy and brotherhood. His own life was a living symbol of his ideal of human love and sympathy. His comrades worked as humble servants of the poor.

Nanak is with those who are low-born among the lowly,  
Nay, who are the lowliest of the lowly :  
How can he rival the great ?  
Where Thou, O Lord, watchest over the lowly,  
Thy look of favour shall be their reward.

To Guru Nanak human greatness did not lie in asceticism or isolation from the energizing currents of social life. He advocated a way of life which allowed for the discharge of civic obligations with the spiritual. He used to say :

If thou must the path of true religion see  
Amongst the world's impurities be from impurities  
free.

He advised his followers to live in the world as a swan lives in water—when it comes out of it, its feathers are all dry :

To live untainted (*nir-anjana*) in the midst of taint (*anjana*) is to practise the true yoga technique.

He himself led a complete life and combined his spiritual mission with the domestic obligations of a father and a husband.

Guru Nanak had a vast and varied experience of life. He travelled extensively, met all sorts of people, rich and poor, Hindus and Muslims, Yogis and Sufis, soldiers and scholars, villagers and townsfolk. This gave him a rare insight into human character and made his methods of persuasion extremely effective. His "sweet reasonableness" brought about amazing transformations in the life and character of all those who came into contact with him. Only one instance would suffice. A wealthy Khatri of Lahore, Duni Chand, who was all the time busy in money matters, once came to see the Guru who gave him a needle and said : "Duni Chand, keep it with thee and give it back to me in the next world." And Duni Chand said : "Master! this needle I shall not be able to carry with me after death, how shall I return it to you?" "What use then, Duni Chand, are thy millions to thee?" And Duni Chand was changed. He distributed most of his wealth amongst the poor and needy and joined the circle of the Guru's followers.

The kernel of Guru Nanak's teachings was the unity of God and the brotherhood of man. Those were not abstract concepts with him but active principles of life based on his personal spiritual experience. He had lively realization of the presence of God. Says the *Janamsakhi* :

God is the one Supreme Being, the Creator, devoid of fear and enmity, immortal, unborn, self-existent and the enlightener by His Grace. God is self-existent, so is His name. Besides Himself, He made Nature, wherein He has His seat and looks on with fondness. He who fashioned the body of the Real is also the Creator of the five elements and their master, the mind. Real are Thy

works and Thy purposes, Thy rule and Thy orders and edicts, Thy mercy and the mark of Thy acceptance. Hundreds of thousands, nay millions upon millions, call Thee as the true Reality. All forces and energies are from Thee, the great Reality, Thy praise or glorification is of real worth. Those who worship the true Reality are real. Only those who worship what is born and dies are unreal.

Guru Nanak rejected the idea of caste and declared noble character rather than noble birth to be the real test of human greatness :

Remember that actions determine caste;  
Man exalts or lowers himself by his own acts.

Protesting against the theories of birth, he says :

How art thou a Brahmin, and How am I a Sudra?  
How am I made of blood and how are thou made of milk ?

In the formulation of his cosmopolitan religious thought, Guru Nanak had drawn as much from the Qur'an as from the Hindu sacred books. Many of his ideas seem to be an echo of the teachings of the Muslim mystics with whom he had long been into contact in the Punjab, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. Respectful references to Shaikh Farid-u'd-Din Ganj-i Shakar in his conversations show that he was deeply influenced by the Chishti mystic ideology.

Few Indians have understood better than Guru Nanak the multi-racial, multi-religious and multi-lingual pattern of the Indian society. He sought to evolve a social attitude which should not merely tolerate different forms of life and thought but would look upon them as part of a common heritage.

## *Shah Waliullah of Delhi : His thought and Contribution\**

Shah Waliullah of Delhi (1703-1762) is one of the most resplendent personalities of Islam during the eighteenth century. His deep erudition, his rare insight into the religious sciences combined with the vigour and dynamism of his thought which could analyse complex sociological situations in the light of religious principles, make him one of the most seminal figures in the history of Islamic thought. His magnum opus *Hujjat ullah al-Bāligha*, which ranks with the *Ihya-i ulum al-Din* of Imām Ghazzālī as a classic on the religious philosophy of Islam,<sup>1</sup> ushered in the dawn of a new era in the intellectual history of modern Islam. The task before the modern Muslim is to rethink the whole system of Islam without completely breaking with the past and, as Iqbāl has correctly said, “perhaps the first Muslim who felt the urge of a new spirit in him was Shah Waliullah of Delhi.”<sup>2</sup> This makes all efforts to

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\*Paper written for a Seminar on Shah Waliullah, organized in Malaysia in December 1978.

1. Shibli, *‘Ilm al-Kalām*, Ma‘arif Press, 1939, p. 117.
2. *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, p. 97.



understand him and his thought relevant to the needs of present day Muslim society.

What gives Shāh Waliullah a pre-eminent place in the history of Islamic thought is the depth and dimension of his approach which responded to the changing needs of the time and provided new tools for the interpretation of moral and religious values of Islam.<sup>1</sup> Rejecting the terminology of a practically dead metaphysics and rising above the traditional exposition of the theological categories of thought, he adopted an integralistic approach which looked at man and his environment from all possible angles—biological, psychological, moral, sociological, humanistic, metaphysical and economic—in a synthetic manner and then evaluated the role of religion in building up morally autonomous personality of an individual and in establishing a healthy moral order of society. He realized that religion could no longer afford to ignore the search for a reconciliation of the oppositions of experience and a justification of the environment in which

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1. A contemporary thus evaluates his contribution :

حضرت شاه ولی الله محدث رحمۃ الله علیہ طریقہ  
جدیدہ بیان نموده اند و در تحقیق اسرار معرفت و  
غوامض علوم طرز خاص دارند ، باین همه علوم و  
کالات از علماء ربانی اند مثل ایشان در محققان صوفیہ  
کہ جامع اند در علم ظاہر و باطن و علم نو بیان کردہ  
اند چند کس گذشتہ باشند .

(Shāh Waliullah Muhaddith—peace be upon him—has enunciated a new method and invented a particular technique for a deep study of sciences and probe into the secrets of gnosis. And in spite of all this learning and accomplishments he was one of the *ulama-i rabani*, like of whom in external and esoteric sciences and originality there have been very few mystics among (those who have preceded him). *Kalamāt-i Tayyābāt*, p. 119.

humanity finds itself. In his preface to the holy Qur'ān he declares with great confidence the basis of his approach:<sup>1</sup>

نصیحت و نیک خواهی مسلمانان در هر زمان و در هر  
مکان رنگی دیگر دارد و اقتضا، دیگری نماید —

(Counsel and advice for the Muslims of every time and every land has a distinct complexion and (is determined by different needs).

He, therefore, went deep into the psychology of man and the ethos of society in his search for giving a new orientation to religious thinking. He analysed the basic social, moral and spiritual needs of contemporary society and restated in this light the *أسرار دین* (the rationale of religion). He believed that Islam provided the best opportunity for the self-realization of man and for creating an ideal realm of values, free from conflicts and exploitation. It was his firm conviction—a conviction which he has expressed again and again in his works—that he was specially ordained by God to fulfil this mission.<sup>2</sup> He calls himself *قائم الزمان* (force of the time) and says that he was directed by the Prophet in a dream, on May 5, 1731 at Mecca, to overthrow all systems (based on exploitation). *فك كل نظام*

For a comprehensive effort of this nature it was imperative to re-structure the whole religious thinking by bringing people to the real fountain of Islam—the Qur'ān and the Sunnah. He translated the Qur'ān into Persian which was then the language of most of the Muslims in India, and popularized the study of *aḥādīth* and prepared commentaries on the *Muwatta* of Imām Mālik, which he thought embodied the spirit

1. *Faṭḥ al-Raḥmān*, p. 1.

2. *Al-Juz al-latīf* (appended to *Anfās al-'arīfīn*), p. 204; *Tāfḥīmāt-i Ilāhiyah*, I, p. 81.

of early Islam and could be instrumental in imbuing an individual's thought and personality with the spirit of the *Sunnah*. It was on the basis of the Qur'ān and the *aḥādīth* that he sought to build a new structure of religious thought and juristic analysis, in consonance with the spirit of Islam and in the light of the exigencies of the situation. Then he surveyed all areas of tension and conflict in the contemporary Muslim thought<sup>1</sup> and earnestly strove to bridge the gulf between the '*ulama-i zāhir* (externalist scholars) and the '*ulama-i bāṭin* (esoteric scholars), the jurists and the mystics, the *ahl-i ḥādīth* and the *ahl-ur-raī*, the believers in *wahdat ul wujūd* and the advocates of *wahdat ash shuhūd*. He believed that this sort of تطيق (adaptation) which he calls جمع بين المختلفات

(combining of opposites) was essential for the evolution of a consolidated, coherent and compact religious ideology which could express itself in the shape of a healthy moral order of society. A great French historian Fustal de Coulanges once observed; "...years of analysis is required for a day of synthesis." Behind Shāh Waltullah's efforts at تطيق were years of patient and penetrating study of Muslim religious sciences and the problems of Muslim society.

Conscious of the need of broadening the base of religious cooperation, he sought to create an atmosphere of understanding and goodwill between the various schools of Muslim jurisprudence. On being asked which of the four schools of Sunni *fiqh* he belonged to, he said : "I try my best to combine all the points of agreement in all the schools and in matters of variance I adhere to what is proved by the genuine *ḥādīth*—which thank God, I can do. If anybody asks me for a *fatwa*, I give it according to whatever school he wishes."<sup>2</sup> This was the first step towards breaking the rigidity of Muslim thought.

1. His book *Insāf fi bayān-i sababb al-ikhtalāf* deals with the causes of differences in the approach of various schools of Islamic jurisprudence.

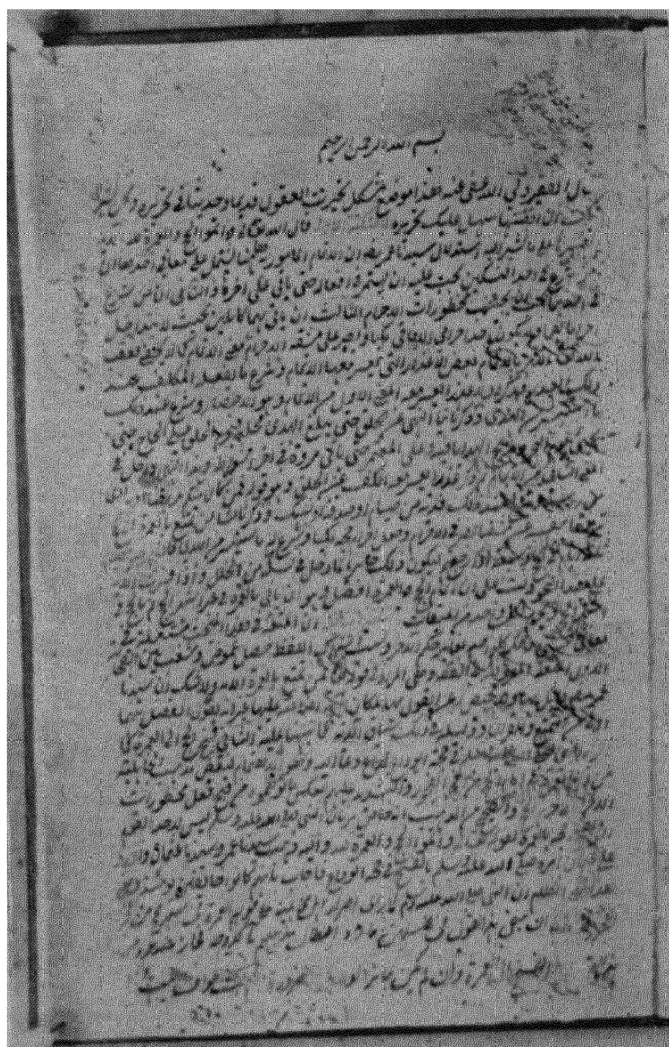
2. Zubaid Aḥmad, *Contribution of India to Arabic Literature*, p. 20.

It paved the way for the development of a new spirit of *ijtihad* in the socio-religious system of Islam. He thus initiated an intellectual renaissance in the realm of Muslim religious thought and prepared the ground for a fresh interpretation of religion in a border framework of social needs and intellectual demands of the time.

Shāh Waliullah was born at Phulat,<sup>1</sup> a small village near Delhi, in 1703, the same year in which Muḥammad bin 'Abdul Wahhāb was born at 'Uyaina. In 1707 Aurangzeb, the last great Mughal Emperor, breathed his last and centrifugal tendencies became rife and rampant in the country. Shāh Waliullah's father, Shāh 'Abdur Raḥīm,<sup>2</sup> was a celebrated scholar of his day and was associated in the compilation of the famous compendium of Muslim law, the *Fatāwā-i 'Alamgiri*. His seminary at Delhi was a veritable centre of Muslim learning in those days. Shāh Waliullah received his education in this institution and he was in his teens when he himself started teaching there. Then he went to Arabia and sat at the feet of eminent scholars of Hejaz. In a *risala*<sup>3</sup> *انسان العین فی مشایخ الحرمین*

he has given an account of the scholars and saints whom he met in Hejaz. He received his *sanad* from Shaikh Abū Ṭāhir b. Ibrahīm of Medina. On his return to Delhi on July 9, 1732, he gave up teaching in the routine manner and concentrated on training advanced scholars in different branches of religious learning and spent most of his time in writing books. His seminary thus turned into a centre for the intellectual and religious resurgence of Islamic sciences and for organizing a country-wide movement for the dissemination of religious knowledge and for infusing a new spirit of religious enquiry

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1. For a short autobiographical account, see *Al Juzw al-latīf fī tarjama-hi 'Abd al-za'if*, Delhi, 1355. A detailed biography was prepared by Maulana Muḥammad 'Ashiq and named as *Qaul al-jilt wa asrar al-khafī*. The only manuscript of this work is preserved in a library at Kakori. See *Shāh Waliullah kay siyāst maktūbāt*, K.A. Nizami, 2nd edition, Delhi.
  2. Shāh Waliullah himself gives an account of his ancestors in *Anfās al-'arīfīn*, Delhi 1355 A.H.
  3. Ahmadi Press, Delhi.



A page from a book in the handwriting of Shah Waliullah  
of Delhi [MS: Nizami Collection]



and investigation and preparing people for replacing a social system, which had outlived its utility, by a system more democratic in spirit and more progressive in outlook. Reacting to the political situation of the country which was suffering at the hands of new powers which had created disturbed conditions all around, he persuaded contemporary princes and rulers, particularly Aḥmad Shāh Abdālī; Najīb ud Daula and Nizāmul Mulk, to exert themselves in setting right the chaotic conditions.<sup>1</sup>

His books on exegesis and Qurānic studies include *Faṭḥ ur-Rahmān*, *al-Fauz al-Kabīr* and *Faṭḥ al-Khabīr*; on ḥādīth, his commentaries on *Muwatṭa* of Imām Mālik, known as *Muṣaffa* and *Musawwa* and *Sharḥ Tarajīm Abwab-i Sahīḥ Bukhārī* deserve special mention. Of course, his principal work which laid the foundation of a new *ilm-i kalām* is his *Hujjat ullah il Bāligha*. *Al-Badūr ul-bāzigha* is, in certain respects, a condensed version of *Hujjat*. To elucidate the position of *Khilāfat-i Rāshida* and establish it as the basis of Islamic life and organization, he wrote his *Izālat ul-Khifa un al-Khulafa*, a work characterized by a deep and searching study of the working of the *Khilāfat-i Rāshida* and its exemplary position in the history of Islam. In *Insaf fi sababb al-ikhtalāf* and *‘Iqd al jid* he deals with juristic problems. Then he wrote books like *Tafḥīmāt-i Ilāhiyah*, *Lam‘āt*, *Qaul ul-Jamīl*, *Khatr-i Kathīr*, *al-Intibāḥ fi salāsīl-i Auliya Allah*, etc., on mystical themes. He wrote about 90 books. Of these only 46 have survived, but they cover almost all the principal areas of Muslim religious learning.

One feels almost staggered when one looks at the encyclopaedic range of Shāh Waltullah’s knowledge and the impact of his ideas, which in the words of H.A.R. Gibb, “contributed essential elements to the present currents of thought in Islam.”<sup>2</sup> The basic categories of his thought and the impact of his ideas may be thus briefly stated :

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1. See *Shāh Waltullah kay siyāsī maktūbāt*, ed. K.A. Nizami.
  2. Foreword to *Contribution of India to Arabic Literature*.

Shāh Waliullah has not only analysed the *raison d'être* for religion, he has explained in depth and detail the role of Islam in fulfilling the needs of man and society. He believed that without religion a man's life on this planet is imperfect. The basic purpose of all religious practices is to purify the inner life of man and to make him realize the divine purpose of life by creating an order of society wherein man is able to develop his potentialities to the full. Plato believed that a nation cannot be strong unless it believes in God; Shāh Waliullah said that a man cannot realize the best in him unless he develops faith in God. For him God was neither a theological myth nor a logical abstraction of unity, but an all embracing personality present in his ethical, intellectual and aesthetic experience and furnishing the inspiration for creating an ideal realm of values in a distressed and struggling world. He strove to understand Him in His dynamic relation to this finite world. This gave a transcendental significance to his concept of the role of religion in human affairs.

To extricate the Muslim mind from its medieval grooves of thought, Shāh Waliullah emphasized the need of *ijtihad* (fresh interpretation) as a *sine qua non* for the health and vigour of the religious community—the *ummah*. In advocating this spirit of *ijtihad* he did not overlook the needs arising out of the space-time conditions. Elucidating his views on this subject, he says that the prophetic method of teaching is that, generally speaking, the law revealed by a prophet takes special notice of the habits, ways and peculiarities of the people to whom he is specifically sent. The prophet who aims at all embracing principles, however, can neither reveal different principles for different peoples, nor leaves them to work out their own rules of conduct. His method is to train one particular people, and to use them as a nucleus for the building up of a universal *shari'at*. In so doing he accentuates the principles underlying the social life of all mankind, and applies them to concrete cases in the light of the specific habits of the people immediately before him. The *shari'at* (ahkam) resulting from this application (e.g. rules relating to penalties for crimes) are in a sense specific to that people; and



since their observance is not an end in itself they cannot be strictly enforced in the case of future generations.<sup>1</sup> This approach opened up infinite possibilities of adjustment with changing conditions in different geographical areas without breaking away from the spirit of early Islam. Had later generations worked out the implications of this observation and introduced this dynamic spirit in the structure of Islam, perhaps the history of Muslims in the 18th and the 19th centuries would have proceeded on entirely different lines and the challenges of the scientific age would have been squarely met. Shāh Waliullah knew that rigid formalism of some theological sections would not respond to his appeal for *ijtihad* for, as he said, "they had strings in their noses like camels and knew nothing where they were going and why."

Shāh Waliullah realized that old and traditional defences of religion were fast crumbling and a new *ilm-i kalām*, which could act as a protecting glacis against the new challenges to religious authority, was a crying need of the hour. To justify the necessity of religion, its role in integrating individual personality and in building up sound social structure imbued with the highest ideals of human service and philanthropy had to be highlighted. Religion had to be explained both as a code of personal morality and as a social ideal. In this approach he appears as a precursor of the Utilitarian and humanistic trends in western thought during the succeeding decades.

Shāh Waliullah's exposition of his metaphysical concepts is admirably original and impressive. He weaves the higher mystic experience with the destiny of man on this planet and propounds his theory of the spiritual evolution of man based on the continuity of human life hereafter. He presents the operation of Allah's emanations تجليات in the physical world in such a manner that our life in this world and the world hereafter appears as a continuous process, carrying with it the

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1. M. Iqbāl, *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, pp. 171-2.

result of our action on this planet. Like Browning's Grammarian he believed that: "Man is forever." Man's biological evolution might have come to a halt, but his spiritual evolution goes on and death is only a turning point, not an end of the journey. The basis of this approach lay in his belief in *wahdat al-wujūd* which, as a working idea in human life, meant on one side 'Continuity of human life,' and on the other, 'oneness and unity of human society.'

Shāh Waltullah's role in the spiritual sphere can be understood only if the conflicts in Indo-Muslim thought are kept in mind. A few decades before him, a French philosopher-physician Bernier had noticed that in India a great conflict was going on between those who believed in *wahdat al-wujūd* and those who disagreed with this doctrine. This had resulted in making the various *silsilahs* exclusive in their approach and isolationistic in their behaviour. Such a tension in the realm of spiritual activity amounted to reducing the effectiveness of the mystic movement. Shāh Waltullah's powerful pen resolved that controversy and created an amicable atmosphere between the various *silsilahs*—a contribution which cannot be overemphasized. He himself had spiritual authority (*khilāfat*) in different *silsilahs* like Qādiri, Chishtī, Naqshbandī, Shattārī and others. He demonstrated by his own example that the ideologies of different *silsilahs* can work effectively, without tension and conflict, in a single personality. But Shāh Waltullah was also fully aware of the degeneration that had set in the mystic *khānwādās*. He restated the aims and objectives of the mystic movement and tried to shake off all its un-Islamic trappings. To him mystic attitude connoted an effort to purify inner life and to integrate spiritual personality so as to reject all baser appetites and urges. He not only restored the balance between *shari'at* and *taṭiqat* but established that any idea of conflict between the two was basically wrong, as *taṭiqat* was not the negation but elaboration of *shari'at*. He discarded the Ajami trapping of *taṣṣawuf* and tried to look at it in its pristine Arab simplicity. He rejected outright the mystical attitude which developed as an excuse of escape from the realities of life.

He bridged the gulf between the 'ulama and the sufis. It was an achievement of great significance, as it did away with a dichotomy of religious talent. Thereafter the distance between the *khanqāh* and the *madrasah* was annihilated and the *khanqāhs* established *madrasahs* within their precincts and the *madrasahs* provided within their portals *zāwiyahs* and *daerahs* for the sufis. The school of Shāh Waliullah maintained this approach and the distinguished successors of the great scholar—particularly at Deobund and other places—looked after both the spiritual and intellectual needs of the people, and teachers of eminence had both pupils and disciples attached to their circles.

Shāh Waliullah's genesis of society and the factors that lead to its healthy development and bring about its decay were deep and far-reaching. He attempted a study of social problems and pathologies as a scientific discipline logically related to sociology. It is not known if he had read Ibn Khaldun's works, but it is undeniable that his prophylactic analysis of the growth and decay of human societies is dynamic, and all-embracing. It is interesting to find that some of the social concepts propounded by modern sociologists like P.A. Sorokin in his *Social and Cultural Dynamics* have been very clearly described by Shāh Waliullah. He studied the fate of ancient civilizations and drawing his inspiration from the Quranic exhortation that there was a lesson for man in the rise and fall of civilizations that had gone by, he analysed every ailment of society and laid down remedies for it. What Mathew Arnold wrote about Goethe may with striking aptness be said about him :

He took the suffering human race  
Read each wound and each weakness clear  
And said : 'Thou ailest here and here.'

In an illuminating chapter of his *Hujjat-ullah-il Bāligha* he has discussed the social and economic abuses which led to the downfall of the Roman and the Sassanid empires, the principle of hereditary succession, narrow and materialistic

outlook of the governing class, their licentiousness and debauchery, the economic exploitation of the people, an inequitable and cumbersome taxation system, the misery of the peasants and artisans and the growth of parasitic classes inside and outside the court. While discussing the causes of the disintegration of the Mughal Empire, he specifically refers to pressure on the parasitic classes, and public treasury due to the growth of heavy taxation on peasants and workers. He believed that '*adl* (equity and justice in every sphere of human relationship) and *tawāzun* (balance in economic relationship) alone can sustain any social or political fabric. Injustice and inequitable distribution of wealth weakened the moral fibre of society and exposed it to all sorts of hazards.

Unlike most Muslim writers of the middle ages, Shāh Waltullah did not simply focus his attention on the administrative and financial bankruptcy of the State. He went deep into the causes of moral inertia and analysed carefully the factors which had devitalized Muslim society by disturbing its economic equilibrium and creating schism in its soul. He surveyed the social and economic structure not from the pedestal of the royal throne but from the vantage point of the peasant's hut and the worker's cottage. It is significant that his appeal for reform of the contemporary social and political systems was addressed to all sections of society—common man, soldiers, artisans, *ulama*, merchants, nobles, etc. Behind this approach worked an indomitable spirit of democratic functioning of state and society. *None before him had addressed the masses on such issues and drawn attention to their vital position in giving shape and strength to the socio-political systems of the day.*

Shāh Waltullah's social thought bristles with ideas based on a clear understanding of the processes of social change. His views on social philosophy may be thus summarily stated :

- (1) He gives the title of *Irtifaqāt* ارتفاقات to a section of his work which deals the efforts of man in the social and spiritual

sphere ارتفاقات الهیه and ارتفاقات معاشیه. What distinguishes man from other creatures is his *intellect* which has ensured his continued existence and given him superiority and power over animals far stronger in physique and prowess. Explaining his father's thought, Shāh Rafiuddin thus defines Man in his *Takmil ul Azhān* :

و ما يتفكرو يصنع بالات انسانا ارضيا

(He thinks and makes things from tools. Man is earthly.)

He considers five aspects of ارتفاقات

1. Organization of livelihood (حکمت معاشیه)
2. Organization of professions (حکمت اکتسایه)
3. Organization of home (حکمت منزلیه)
4. Organization of trade (حکمت تعاملیه)
5. Co-operation (حکمت تعاونیه)

In dealing with each one of these *irtifāqāt*, he looks at problems from all angles—psychological, spiritual, moral, social and economic. All the different sciences then merge in his own system of thought and provide a new angle to the study of the theme. Analysis and synthesis go side by side in his treatment of social problems. His genesis of society takes

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1. The root word is رفق which means being benevolent, kind for easy. رتفاق means use, utility, serviceability. Whatever man needs in the world is present but these forces are to be tamed and tutored to be brought under control and used.

into account all its stages of growth—villages, towns, cities and ultimately reach the international community. The be-all and end-all of human efforts in this direction is the creation of an international community, free from all types of tensions and exploitation. Explaining his concept of city, he observes :

“City does not mean the high wall, the market place or the fortress. In fact if small villages be situated near one another so that there be classes of people dealing with one another we shall call even this collection of villages a city. A city with the interrelation among the various classes comprising it is an organism and every class of people and every household residing therein is, as it were, a limb of the organism just as we have our own limbs. This organism is a composite body and it is essential that its health should be fully maintained and safeguarded.”

He calls human individual *انسان صغير* (small man) and humanity as a whole *انسان كبير* (big man) and works out his idea of the ‘unity and oneness of mankind’ which he considers to be the sole objective of religion. All that contributes to unity and oneness of human society is a life-promoting process; whatever disturbs peace and amity tends to amputate the limbs of the body. Religion with its faith in the Unity of Godhead provided the essential requisites for the creation of a universal order which ensured individual freedom and collective justice.

In developing his thought on these lines’ Shāh Waliullah proceeds from the basic concept that all land belongs to Allah<sup>1</sup>—a postulate fraught with revolutionary possibilities. If this basic concept is accepted and translated into practice there can be no concentration of wealth or exploitation of resources by any particular individual or people. He declares in

1. For details see *Hujjat ullah il-Bāligha*, II, pp. 103-104.

unequivocal terms :

ان كان اسقماء فيها ليس له ، دخل في التعاون . . . او بما  
هو تراض يشبه الاقتضاب . . . فليس من العقود  
المرضية ولا الاسباب الصالحة و انما هو باطل و سعت باصل  
الحكمة المدينة

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(If in increasing property there is no cooperation and goodwill, or the agreement is obtained through compulsion, such acquisition is undesirable and wrong. From the point of view of social life it is false and sinful).

Personal property in his view was justifiable only to the extent that it was not against public interest and was not acquired through exploitation. If possession of personal property clashed with collective good, the public good should prevail. Shāh Waltullah was of the view that exploitation of any class, group, profession or people acted like a canker in destroying the live tissues of a society. A society which fails in checking 'exploitation' withers away in no time. Justice and fair field for all are the life-breath of a society; moderation and equilibrium its motive force and *حكمت تعاونه* (cooperation)

a guarantee for its survival. It is in the elaboration of his thought on these lines that Shāh Waltullah appeals to the modern mind and provides essential elements for the construction of Muslim socio-political attitudes in keeping with the spirit of the modern age.

Shāh Waltullah's political ideology evolved out of his sociological and moral concepts. He did not propound abstract ideas but played an important role in contemporary politics. His political letters which the writer of this article had the good fortune to discover and publish throw a lot of

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1. *Hujjat ullah il-Bāligha*, II, p. 103.

light on his political role, the details of which may need a separate paper.

Shāh Waltullah's political thought finds a detailed expression in *Izalat ul Khifa*. The warp and woof of his political thought was supplied by the *Khilafat-i Rashida*. He had studied it both as the basis of the *Islamic shari'at* as well as the exponent of the Islamic political ideals. He remarks :<sup>1</sup>

بعلم الیقین دانسته شد که اثبات خلافت این بزرگوار  
ان اصلی ست از اصول دین تا و قتی که این اصل را  
محکم نگیرند هیچ مسئله از مسائل شریعت محکم نشود

(I) know it for certain that affirmation of the *Khilafat* of the elders (i.e. Pious Caliphs) is the foundation of the essentials of *din* and unless this principle is firmly adopted, no postulate of *Shari'at* can be established).

He went deep into the meaning and significance as well as the role and religious importance of the *Khilafat* and then formulated his political thought and ideology. While describing the extension of Muslim political power in non-Muslim lands during the *Khilafat-i Rashida* he has made very significant observations about the way in which Muslim political and social life should be organized in such lands.<sup>2</sup> It was the deepest longing of his soul to see the democratic spirit of the early socio-political organisation of Islam working as an operative principle in human life. In it he found a blessing not only for the Muslims but for the humanity as a whole.

Following the Qur'anic method of building up a healthy society, Shāh Waltullah laid great stress on a proper organiza-

1. *Izālat al-Khifa*, p. 1.

2. *Ibid.*, pp. 122-158.



tion of family life. His discussions on this subject show a remarkable vitality of ideas and open fresh avenues for social and economic studies. He firmly believed that the character of the political institutions of a country was ultimately determined by the type of family life that it developed. He considered 'civil-consciousness' to be a pre-requisite for the development of 'political consciousness.' It was, according to him the life-breath of a healthy society. In his *Budur ul Bazigha* and *Hujjat ullah il Baligha* he has dealt at length with the factors which lead to the growth of civil consciousness as well as the tendencies which contribute to its disintegration and ruin.<sup>1</sup>

Alone among the Muslim writers of the eighteenth century, Shāh Waliullah evaluated the importance of economic factors in social and political life. He believed economic equilibrium (*tawazun*) to be indispensable for social and political order. Accumulation of wealth in the hands of a particular class leads to social chaos. The concentration of people on a particular profession to the exclusion of others disturbs the basis of economic relationship.<sup>2</sup> An excessive burden of taxation on the revenue producing classes—peasants, merchants, artisans—ruins a polity.<sup>3</sup> What principles should then determine the incidence of taxation? How should vocational distribution take place? These and similar other questions have been raised and answered by Shāh Waliullah with remarkable clarity. His emphasis on the importance of economic factors in social life should not be interpreted to mean that the great scholar analysed man and his experience in this world only with reference to his economic problems and urges. Shāh Waliullah subordinated all values to the moral and spiritual needs of man, but gave to economic factors their proper place in human affairs.

The range of Shāh Waliullah's learning was encyclopaedic.

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1. *Hujjat ullah il-Baligha*, I, 79-80, II, 375-408; *Budur-ul Bazigha*, Chapter XI.
  2. *Hujjat ullah il-Baligha*, I, 78-85.
  3. *Ibid.*, p. 199.

His versatility of erudition and originality of thought encompassed almost every branch of Muslim sciences. What strikes a student of Shāh Waliullah most is how his soul had registered like seismograph the attitudes and trends of an age that was yet to be born. In his thought one can catch the glimpse of the new age. In this context it may be pointed out that he knew intimately the condition of the Muslim lands and the problems faced by them. His stay in Hejaz provided him an opportunity to study the problems of the Muslim people of different regions.<sup>1</sup> It is, therefore, in a broader framework that his thought can be analysed and interpreted.

The movement initiated by Shāh Waliullah for the reconstruction of Muslim religious thought and revival of Muslim religious sciences and the social and moral uplift of Muslim society did not die with him. His successors—Shāh ‘Abdul ‘Aziz, Shāh ‘Abdul Qādir, Shāh Rafiuddin, Maulana Ismā‘il, Sayyid Aḥmad Shahid, Hāji Imdādullah and others—worked zealously to propagate the ideas of their master and bring about an intellectual Renaissance of the Musalmans. It is significant that there is hardly any Muslim institution of religious learning in India which does not owe its existence, directly or indirectly, to Shāh Waliullah. His was a seminal personality which gave birth to a number of movements for the reconstruction of religious thought and revitalization of Muslim society. His impact was felt in the religious, social, and political spheres.

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1. احوال مردم هند یر ما مخفی نیست که خود مولد و منشا فقیر است و بلاد عرب را نیز دیده ایم و سیر نموده احوال مردم ولایت از ثقات آنجا شنیده ایم و تحقیق کرده

## *Muslim Influence on the Bhakti Movement*

Mysticism, it is said, has no genealogy. It is the eternal quest of man to have direct experience of the Ultimate Reality. It teaches that 'the divine disclosed itself in the human race as a whole' and that it is possible for all human beings – irrespective of their caste, colour, or creed – to have direct communion with Him. The spark of divine love shines alike in the heart of the learned and the illiterate, the Hindu and the Muslim. Mystic ideas have, therefore, found their expression in all languages of the world. It is significant that *Bhakti* and *Ahsan*<sup>1</sup> 'the earliest word used for mystic experience in Islam) have the same basic concept of direct communion with God.

The *Bhakti* trend in Hinduism has a long tradition which can be traced back to hoary past. The *Upanishads* contain the earliest exposition of pantheistic ideas on which the entire structure of mystic thought has been built up in almost all religions, but it assumed a new and interesting dimension in

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1. In the Traditions of the Prophet of Islam *Ahsan* has been thus defined : "You pray God as if you are looking at Him; if that be no possible, you feel as if He is looking at you". The concept of direct communion with the Infinite and the Eternal is thus inherent in the mystic concept both in Islam and Hinduism.

the fifteenth and the sixteenth centuries due to intimate contact with the Muslim mystics. Many of the saints of the Bhakti school visited the *khanqahs* of the Sufis and exchange of views between them led to new formulations in the Bhakti cult and paved the way for the emergence of new sects and new attitudes. One of the cardinal aims of the Bhakti saints was to bring various religious and cultural groups nearer and closer through inculcation of a cosmopolitan approach and a humanitarian spirit which transcended all parochial considerations of caste or creed. For them all human beings were "the children of God on earth" and it was their bounden duty to work for complete harmony among them.

The Bhakti movement registered a strong protest against the prevailing vices of society, polity and religion. Indian society at that time was in the grip of what Toynbee calls 'schism of the soul'. Religion was a mere formality and the paraphernalia of rituals and ecclesiastical formalities had deadened the fervour of spiritual life. The Bhakti saints reacted to this situation with determination and courage. They emphasized the unity of Godhead and rejected all polytheistic and idolatrous concepts. Apart from its tremendous spiritual significance, monotheism acts as a great integrating force in human society. When the saints of the Bhakti school propounded their monotheistic concepts, they, in fact, took the first significant step towards the integration of various religious and social components of Indian society. They rejected rituals and ecclesiastical formalities as impediments in the growth of spiritual personality and emphasized interiorization of religious rites. They looked down upon mere adherence to externalia as a negation of the true spirit of religion. They were averse to the idea of caste and treated all human beings as made of the 'self same clay'. They gave to their followers, who were mostly men belonging to lower strata of society, the message that direct communion with God was possible for them. The opening of the door of divine communion for all people, particularly those to whom this was denied for long,

was a revolutionary step fraught with tremendous possibilities of spiritual resurgence of society. It gave the down-trodden a sense of dignity and spiritual self-confidence. In fact many of the saints of the Bhakti school themselves belonged to the lower strata of society and came from the class of weavers, cobblers, tanners, carders etc.<sup>1</sup> Why of all other sections of society this class should raise its standard of revolt against discrimination in society and ecclesiastical formalism, and embark upon spreading a message of love and harmony among all culture groups, requires a careful study of the social milieu and the sociological background of developments in medieval India—a task which the writer of the lines has undertaken elsewhere in some other context.

The fifteenth and the sixteenth centuries saw amongst Muslims also several movements which aimed at greater emphasis on the spirit of religion rather than its formalities and rituals. The Mehdavis raised their voice against the involvement of contemporary Musalmans in the externalia of religion and exhorted them to turn to the culture of their soul. The Raushaniya and the Shattari movements were inspired by a cosmopolitan spirit and aimed at bringing about harmony in human relationship. The Shattaris attempted a synthesis of Hindu and Muslim mystic concepts and worked for goodwill and harmony between Hindus and Muslims.<sup>2</sup> It would however, be wrong to expect complete identity of views among all these movements. They differed in emphasis and accentuation. But the whole religious atmosphere of India during these centuries seems surcharged with certain feelings common to Hindus and Muslims alike. Underlying the whole religious activity there is an urge to work out synthesis of different religious attitudes. It seems that during the earlier centuries ideas, attitudes and behaviour patterns of different religions and cultural groups were thrown into a cauldron and

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1. Kabir was a weaver, Sa'in was a barber, Raidas was a worker in leather, Dadu was a cotton cleaner.
  2. Shaikh Muhammad Ghaus Shattari's *Bahrul Hayat*, a Persian rendering of *Amrit Kund*, opened vistas of communication and contact.

during this period these were being cast anew in consonance with the Indian psyche.

The Sufi influence on the sages of the Bhakti cult may be analysed by (a) identifying the nature and extent of social contact between the Sufis and the *bhagats*; (b) bringing to light semantic evidence to illustrate impact of Sufi traditions on Bhakti literature and (c) working out elements of identity in the mystic and religious concepts of the Bhakti and the Sufi saints.

It is well nigh established on the basis of early evidence that many of the Bhakti saints had come into close contact with the Sufis and had passed some of their time in the Sufi *khanqahs* and *zawiyahs*. Visits of Hindu jogis to Muslim *khanqahs* are recorded in the early mystic works, like *Fawa'id-u'l-Fu'ad*. Shaikh Farid Ganj-i-Shakar's *jama'at khanah* at Ajodhan was visited by *jogis*, *qalandars*, itinerant mystics and others. This tradition developed further in the centuries that followed and many of the Bhakti saints of the fifteenth and the sixteenth centuries developed close contact with Muslim saints and sages. Contact led to communication of ideas which paved the way for identity of approach and ultimately facilitated the development of cosmopolitan trends. According to Macauliffe : "It is certain that Ramnanda came in contact at Benares with learned Musalmans." Kabir appears in Muslim hagiological literature as a sufi saint. Abul Fazl and the author of *Dabistan u'l-Mazahib* call him a *muwahhid*, i.e. a theist, but not necessarily a Muslim. Mu'in-u'd-din Abdullah Khweshgi however, gives, a detailed account of Kabir in his encyclopaedia of Indo-Muslim saints, the *Ma'arij-u'l-Walayat*,<sup>1</sup> compiled in 1682, which shows that he looked upon him as a Muslim saint. The author of *Khazinat-u'l-Asfia* and other later hagiologists follow Mu'in-u'd-din Abdullah. According to *Ma'arij-u'l Walayat*, Shaikh Kabir *Julaha* (weaver) was a

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1. An unique manuscript of this work in two large volumes is in the personal collection of the writer of these lines. The *Ma'arij-u'l-Walayat* formed the basis of many later sufi biographies.

disciple of Shaikh Taqi *Ha'ik* (weaver).<sup>1</sup> He has highlighted the following aspects of Kabir's life and thought :

- (1) Kabir was among the spiritually perfect saints who had attained gnosis.
- (2) He concealed his real spiritual greatness by following the *malamat* ways.
- (3) His Hindi works show beyond doubt his spiritual greatness.
- (4) He is the first who has used the vehicle of Hindivi language to express his mystic experiences. One who studies his works with sincerity finds gems and pearls of spiritual wisdom in them.
- (5) Both Hindus and Muslims believe in him.

Though *Mir'at-ul-Asrar*, written during the time of Shahjahan, also refers to Kabir, it is *Ma'arj-u'l-Walayāt* which gives the most comprehensive account of the saint. Who was Shaikh Taqi who is looked upon as the spiritual mentor of Kabir? There were two saints of this name, one of them lived at Manikpur and the other at Jhusi (near Allahabad). According to Mu'in-u'd-din Abdullah, Shaikh Taqi was a resident of Kara Manikpur. Wescott is of the view that the saint of Jhusi was Kabir's spiritual mentor. Whether he was a disciple of Shaikh Taqi or not, Kabir had definitely close contact with Muslim saints of the period. He considered himself to be divinely ordained to show people the path of Divine realization. "I was sent here because the world was seen in misery, all were bound in chains of birth and death and no one had found the lasting home."<sup>2</sup> He adopted the language of the masses in order to communicate his ideas to the people. "Sanskrit is indeed the water of the well, but Bhasa (the Hindi language) is like the running river."<sup>3</sup> He was also of the view that those who would not listen to his

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1. The author of *Ma'arj-u'l-Walayāt* says that his name had an incantational value among the charmers of snakes. While treating a person bitten by snake, his name was repeated.
  2. Kabir : Siddhart Dipika, Adi Mangal.
  3. Yugalanand : Kabir Sakhi, Bhasa Ka Anga.

teachings would "go to the gates of Yama," and those who would listen to him would attain salvation.<sup>1</sup> This consciousness of mission is, no doubt, significant but it is common in the leaders of religious thought during those days. The Mehdi and the leaders of the Raushaniya movement likewise believed in their mission.

Guru Nanak also had intimate relations with Muslim saints and sufis of the age. He had travelled widely in the country and outside and had come into close contact with the Muslim saints. He met Shaikh Ibrahim and Shaikh Farid Thani who belonged to the house of the great Chishti saint, Babu Farid Ganj-i-Shankar. The Guru Granth contains many slokas of Shaikh Farid. He met the saints of Panipat and Multan also. At Dacca, he met Baba Salih and Hazrat Shah 'Ali.

According to *Styar-u'l-Mutakhkherin* the first teacher of the Guru was Syed Hasan who taught the principal Muslim books to him. According to another tradition he learnt Persian and Arabic with Mulla Qutb-u'd-din. It is said that it was at the request of Shaikh Ibrahim that Guru Nanak composed his famous *Asā-kī-vār*, which is sung by the Sikhs early in the morning.<sup>2</sup>

According to the author of *Dabistan-u'l-Mazahib* Dadu Dayal was a *naddaf* (carder of cotton), but Sudhakar Dwivedi is of the opinion that he was a tanner or currier (*mochi*) and his family profession was that of making leather bags (*mot*) for drawing water from wells.<sup>3</sup> Dadu is reported to have visited Ajmer, Delhi, Amber and other places and met many Muslim saints. According to Dr. Tara Chand : "Dadu manifests perhaps greater knowledge of Sufism than his predecessors, perhaps because he was the disciple of Kamal

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1. Kabir : Siddhant Dipika, Adi Mangal, p. 81.

2. Trilochan Singh, *Guru Nanak* p. 111. It is said that Guru Nanak left this autographed work with Shaikh Ibrahim. Guru Arjun procured it from his successors when he compiled Adi Granth.

3. Sudhakar Dwivedi, *Dadu Dayal ki Bani*, Introduction.



who probably had greater leanings towards Islamic ways of thinking than others."<sup>1</sup>

Similarly other saints of the Bhakti School had come into contact with Muslim saints and this contact created ideological bridges between Islam and Hinduism.

Linguistic analysis of the works of the Bhakti saints reveals deep impact of Persian mystic literature, language and ideas. It is well-known that the mystic terminology as evolved by the Muslim saints is not only capable of expressing the most subtle spiritual experiences but is thoroughly original and illuminating. The Bhakti saints adopted it as the most effective and useful vehicle for the expression of their spiritual states, both *hal* (condition) and *maqam* (station). Kabir uses a language which is so saturated with Sufi ideas that it is difficult to deny the influence of Muslim mystic traditions on his mind. Nearly two hundred Arabic and Persian words have been found in his work and these words are from Sufi lore and convey Kabir's spiritual message in term which had come to assume definite connotation. No one ignorant of Sufi tradition could have used this terminology with such confidence and clarity. The *Gulistan* and *Bustan* of Sa'di, the *Pand nama* of Khwaja Farid-u'd-din 'Attar and the *mathnavi* of Rumi supplied to Kabir the woof and warp of his mystic thought. The *Guru Granth* has scores of Persian and Arabic words which show that Guru Nanak had come to acquire personal and intimate knowledge about many delicate concepts of Islamic mysticism. He absorbed and assimilated the teachings of Shaikh Farid Ganj-i-Shakar which were floating in the atmosphere and preserved them for posterity. "His free use of Koranic terminology to express some of his theological views in his later writings," writes Dr. Trilochan Singh, "shows that it is during this early period that he studied the Koran and other Islamic scriptures available to him."<sup>2</sup>

Though Chaitanya's life does not reveal any significant

1. *Influence of Islam on Indian Culture*, p. 185.

2. *Guru Nanak, Founder of Sikhism*, Delhi 1969, p. 13.



contact with Muslim saints and knowledge of Muslim mystic lore, his two disciples, Rup and Sanathan, knew Arabic and Persian. Namadev's writings also contain very large number of Persian and Arabic words. Tukaram says :

"First among the great names is Allah, never forget to respect it.

Allah is verily one, the *nabi* (Prophet) is verily one."

A careful study of the literature produced by the Bhakti saints reveals the source of their mystic inspiration and their closeness to Muslim mystic tradition.

Many of the concepts which formed the bedrock of the Bhakti movement during this period owed their germination to Sufi teachings. The concept of Divine Unity is no doubt found in early Hindu Sacred Books also but the way it was articulated during the fifteenth and the sixteenth century bears a definite imprint of Islamic teachings. It is not merely affirmation of One God, but negation of all other gods. Affirmation and negation which go side by side show Muslim impact. Referring to the concept of God in *Upanishads*, Dr. Radhakrishnan observes :

"The Upanishads, no doubt, shattered the authority of these Gods in the world of thought, but did not disturb their sway in the world of practice. So men were not wanting who paraded the gods as the creators of the world and governors of the universe able to affect for good or evil the destiny of man."<sup>1</sup>

While rejecting idolatry in all forms, the saints of the Bhakti School were obviously working under the influence of Muslim saints.

The Bhakti saints looked upon God as One and Supreme, who cannot be identified with any material object. Kabir says :

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1. *Indian Philosophy* Vol. I, p. 453.

“The Absolute (*Para Brahma*), the Supreme Soul (*Purusa*) dwells beyond the beyond.”<sup>1</sup>

This is an almost verbal translation of the Sufi view about God : “He is beyond, beyond and beyond the beyond.” He considered God as “Nur” (light), and says :

“See the ocean—filling one Light (*nur*) which spreads in the whole creation.”<sup>2</sup> The concept of God as “Nur” is Quranic, wherein it is said : “God is the Light of the Heaven and the Earth.”

The saints of the Bhakti School rejected idolatry and all polytheistic concepts. Our remarks about Dadu : “His fierce intolerance of caste and idolatry—his vivid consciousness of God as Creator, Ruler and Judge, and his emphasis on moral freedom and responsibility, are part of his Muslim inheritance.”<sup>3</sup>

The entire structure of Muslim mystic thought is built on the basic concept that God can be approached by all and any human being. The Qur’an makes two very significant statements :

“God is nearer to man than his life-vein.” “If man calls Him, He responds to His call.” The echo of these teachings is found in the teachings of the saints of the Bhakti school. Kabir says :

“Hear, ye Sadhus, He is in the breath of breaths.”

Again God speaks in Kabir’s verses :

“If thou art a true seeker I shall meet thee immediately in a moment’s search.”

In many of Dadu’s utterances there is in echo of Sufi teachings. For instance he says :

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1. Kabir, *Rekhte* No. 36.

2. Kabir, *Rekhte*.

3. W.G. Orr, *A Sixteenth Century Indian Mystic*, London 1947, p. 71.

"Dadu the tank of his presence is in the heart and there I take my complete ablution; after performing the ablution in front of Allah I say the prayers there.

Dadu makes his body His mosque, he finds the five members of the assembly (*jama'at*) in the mind as well as the leader of the prayers (*mulla'im am*); the indescribable God is Himself in front of him and he makes his bows and greetings."

Dadu regards the whole body as the rosary on which the name of God is repeated. Amir Khusrau had said earlier : "Every vein in my body is a sacred thread (*zunnar*)."

The Bhakti saints raised their voice against all caste discriminations and prejudices. They believed in the brotherhood of man and looked down upon all concepts which created distance between one man and another. Their faith in classless society was firm. They declared :

"In all vessels whether Hindu or Muslim there is one soul."

They established traditions of cosmopolitanism and came to be regarded as symbols of love and harmony between different religious groups. When Kabir breathed his last, his body was claimed by the Hindus for cremation and the Muslims for burial. There can be no greater evidence of broad and tolerant approach to different religions. 'Urfi, a poet of Akbar's court, thus invokes the spirit of cosmopolitanism articulated by the Bhakti saints :

چنان با نیک و بد عرفی بسر کن کز پس مردن  
مسلمات بزمزم شوید و هندو بسو زاند

('Urfi! live with good and bad in this world in such way that after death the Musalmans wash your body in *zamzam* water and the Hindus burn you).

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